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Cover picture  
"Canvassing for a Vote or Candidate Electioneering", 1851-2, reproduced from *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham* by E. Maurice Block (296pp, University of Missouri Press, £47, 0 8262 0461 9).

## Invitations to a sinless world

Alan Brinkley

GARRY WILLS  
*Reagan's America: Innocents at home*  
472pp, Doubleday, \$19.95.  
0385 18286-4  
To be published in the UK by Heinemann on  
January 8, 1988.

Americans are not the only people, surely, who try to inhabit a moral universe essentially unrelated to the realities of their world. But Americans are, perhaps, more preoccupied with their own sense of themselves than the peoples of other societies - more obsessed with defining their national "character", exposing their national "myths", exploring the vagaries of their national "soul". There are now at least three generations of scholarship examining the belief in American "innocence", celebrating or (more often) lamenting the conviction that America has a special destiny, that it is insulated from the normal workings of history. Implicit in most such discussions is the assumption that if only Americans could free themselves from the stifling burden of their own mythology, they might learn to behave more responsibly and effectively at home and in the world.

That America has a national mythology, and that many Americans choose to believe it, is hardly open to doubt. But to what degree does that mythology affect the way people actually behave? Does the moral universe many Americans like to think they inhabit determine their actions, or does it simply provide a comforting rationale for them? That is one of many intriguing questions that arise from Garry Wills's intelligent and immensely provocative effort to explain the meaning of Ronald Reagan - and through him the meaning of America.

Wills's thesis is, on the surface at least, reasonably simple, and to those familiar with his earlier work (most notably, his influential *Roman Agonistes* 1969), even predictable. Reagan is a reflection of how Americans wish

to see themselves, an almost uncanny embodiment of the nation's myths and self-deceptions. He has become so, moreover, not through a cynical manipulation of public appetites. Reagan himself genuinely believes the fantasies he promotes. He has reinvented his own past and has come to believe in the reinvention. In the same way, he has re-created the nation's past and has persuaded the American people to believe in that re-creation as well. But however sincere Reagan's beliefs may be, they are the product of wish not reality. They are a fantasy woven to protect himself, and the nation, from the disturbing intrusions of the world as it is. And because they serve to shape not only rhetoric but action, they are immensely dangerous.

Much of *Reagan's America* consists of reasonably conventional (and very skilful) biography, indeed one of the most extensive and thoroughly researched accounts of Reagan's pre-presidential life yet to appear. But it is a highly and deliberately selective account, shaped less by the actual course of events than by Reagan's own interpretation of them. At times, in fact, Wills seems principally interested in offering a critical discussion of a text: Reagan's own autobiography of 1966, ghost-written by Richard G. Hubler and originally published under the title *Where's the Rest of Me?* (a line from one of Reagan's films). Political autobiography is by definition a self-serving and even deceptive genre, and Reagan's is no exception. Wills, however, reveals a pattern here that suggests something more than the normal political impulse to soften the rough spots and hide the mistakes. Time and again, Reagan has distorted or simply invented events in ways that contribute less to hiding his own faults than to hiding those of the world around him.

Reagan's childhood, he claims in his autobiography, was "one of those rare Huck Finn-Tom Sawyer idylls". Mark Twain's novels, Wills points out, are not "idylls" at all, but "chronicles of superstition, racism, and

crime". Reagan's allusion, however, is less to the realities of the literature than to the popular mythology widely if wrongly associated with it - the image of a simple, innocent world of small towns and river boats and self-reliant, enterprising individualists. Yet Reagan remembers his childhood as inaccurately as he remembers Twain's novels; his own life was no more carefree or idyllic than Huck Finn's. The warm and comforting family he portrays was, in fact, rootless and often troubled. His father, a Roman Catholic, was an unsuccessful salesman increasingly befogged by alcoholism; his mother was an intensely religious Protestant, who immersed her son in the life of her faith and appeared with him in church plays. The happy youthful activities Reagan recounts occurred in the context of recurrent family tensions, frequent moves from one community to another, long hours spent in low-paid and exhausting jobs, and an apparently constant (if unspoken) yearning to escape his small-town Midwestern world for something larger and more glamorous.

Reagan's first real break with his provincial background came not in college (he went to a remote denominational institution closely tied to the small-town Protestant world he had always known), but after, when he worked for several years as a sportscaster for various Midwestern radio stations. Reagan learned his trade from the example of such accomplished myth-makers as Graham McNamee and Grantland Rice - the leading figures in a generation of sports journalists to whom accuracy was far less important than colour and uplift. Reagan was a success as a broadcaster because he was a success at creating appealing fantasies and making effective use of anecdotes. Even before he arrived in Hollywood, therefore, he had become adept at filtering reality through the lens of his own or his audience's wishes.

But what better place to refine that ability than in the world of illusion into which Reagan moved in 1937 and where he lived for nearly thirty years? Even more than today, the film

stars of the 1940s and 1950s - dependent as they were on the whims of powerful studios and their publicity departments - played assigned roles not only on the screen, but in their lives. It must have been extraordinarily difficult for any actor to identify the point at which public fantasy ended and private reality began; indeed the annals of Hollywood are filled with tragic stories of men and women destroyed by their inability to live with that uncertainty.

Reagan seems to have had no trouble at all. He happily co-operated with the studio image-makers and seems, in the end, actually to have believed in the identity they created for him. During the Second World War, for example, Reagan was ineligible for combat duty because of his poor eyesight. Instead, he accepted an honorary commission in the Air Force and spent the war years making films (*Rear Gunner, For God and Country* and others) designed to raise public morale. He was rarely away from Hollywood. But the studio public-relations offices and the fan-magazines told another story. Reagan was a "soldier", like other soldiers, leaving his wife (Jane Wyman) and children to go "off to war". Feature stories described Wyman bravely "carrying on", raising the family and maintaining the household while her man was "away". Newsreels and magazine photos depicted touching reunions, when Reagan "came back" for leaves and visits.

The deception was, perhaps, harmless enough in itself. But Reagan seemed unable to accept it as the publicity ruse it was. Even decades later, he liked to talk about "coming back from the war", like other veterans, eager to take up family life again (a life that in his case had never been interrupted). To this day, he refers at times to scenes from war films (his own and others) as real events from his own past. Or he simply makes up events altogether, as a studio publicist might have done in 1945. He told Yitzhak Shamir in 1983 of his experience as part of a crew filming Nazi death camps

For Ford Stoppard Proust  
Eliot Shakespeare Lacan Edw  
Brontë Empson Rousseau  
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## LITERATURE FROM CAMBRIDGE

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at the end of the war – a story so touching that both the President and the Prime Minister later repeated it. It was completely false. Reagan had never been near the death camps, as the White House later admitted (just as he has never visited Nicaragua but once shouted in response to pro-Sandinista hecklers in Europe. "They haven't been there. I have.") Such stories, Wills argues, are told not so much to deceive as to exhort and uplift. They are efforts to give "a pep talk" to the country. They are Hollywood's preoccupation with myth-making and illusion transferred to the White House, evidence of a general lack of interest in separating truth from desire.

Reagan has, at times, even reinvented his own inventions: not just his life, but his parts in films. He recalls his role as an irresponsible wastrel in *King's Row* as his finest performance; but he describes the pathetic character he portrayed in terms utterly incompatible with the real message of the film. He refers frequently to George Gipp, the Notre Dame football-player he once played whose premature death figures importantly in *The Knute Rockne Story* and who has since entered the pantheon of "heroes" Reagan likes to invoke. But only in the cinema was George Gipp a hero. The real "Gipper" was a vicious and dissolute libertine, largely responsible for his own death. Reagan was successful in Hollywood as an actor in light romantic comedies, a genre for which his gentle, amiable personality was ideally suited. But he prefers instead to remember himself as the star of rugged westerns, in which he was a conspicuous failure.

Reagan's vision of his own past intersects with and reinforces a vision of American society at large. Both are the source of moral verities; both are essentially inaccurate. The Illinois of his childhood, as he portrays it, is a Norman Rockwell landscape, stable, pious and homogeneous. In reality it was a rough, turbulent, rapidly growing region troubled by violence, racism and frequent personal failures. He is, he likes to believe, the product of a time and a place in which self-reliant individuals helped America to grow and flourish without assistance from or interference by the government. In fact, his various home towns – like much of the nation – experienced their most important growth as a direct result of government subsidies for canal and railroad building; his own family survived the Great Depression largely by virtue of the jobs his father received from New Deal relief agencies. "If we seek Ronald Reagan's roots", Wills writes,

we shall not find them in a "land made great because it was free from big government". Rather, the land grew by the influence of a government that was itself growing in the extraordinary effort at incorporating the whole West. . . . Much as he tried to deny it, Ronald Reagan was enmeshed in the arms of government.

Later in life, he was cradled in the arms of a tough corporate conglomerate: the talent

agency MCA, which in the 1950s used heavy and, some believe, illegal pressure to drive competitors out of business and establish a virtual monopoly over large segments of the film industry. Reagan was President of the Screen Actors' Guild during the period of MCA's most rapid and ruthless expansion; his own agent was a power in the company; and Reagan apparently used his influence with his union to help MCA's rise to dominance. (In return, MCA managed to rescue Reagan's then failing career.) But the example of MCA – which has done more than any other organization to limit opportunities for individual entrepreneurs in the film industry, which has been almost continually under investigation by the Justice Department for decades, and which almost got Reagan himself indicted in the early 1960s – has done nothing to weaken Reagan's faith in the essential beneficence of private industry. Some critics (most notably Dan E. Moldea, author of a recent "expose" of Reagan's involvement with MCA and MCA's with organized crime) have seen evidence in all this of fundamental dishonesty. Wills takes a different, if scarcely more flattering view. It is evidence of Reagan's remarkable ignorance and naiveté, his uncanny ability to see the world as he wishes it to be: "Reagan was generally favorable to business as such, which he contrives to think of as an individual rather than a social activity. He was always prepared to think the best of his own bosses."

To Wills, Reagan's apparently wilful ignorance of his own life and world are signs not only of a personal but a national trait, what he describes as the American doctrine of "original sinlessness". And to those familiar with Wills himself and his own earlier work, it should come as no surprise that he sees that doctrine as the key to a great cultural malady. A self-proclaimed conservative, a pietistic Catholic, Wills believes in the idea of "the Fall"; in the inherent corruption of human nature, in religion as a vehicle for man's struggle to earn deliverance from the sickness of his soul. But Americans, he argues, have derived from their evangelistic history the dangerous belief that they are somehow exempt from sinfulness. They have attempted to transcend corruption not in the next world (as traditional Christianity prescribes) but in this. They have made of religion something not redemptive but therapeutic. "The earlier myth", he writes, "called for a repenting awareness of sin. The later one calls for a dutiful innocence and optimism."

Ronald Reagan – in his war on pessimism, self-doubt and the idea of limits – is the authentic voice of one of the deepest yearnings of the American soul: the desire to deny sin, to escape history, to achieve perfection in this world. And he has become that voice because he is himself "so energetic a believer in the counter-myth to the Fall". As such, he has helped Americans to strike

a tacit bargain with each other not to challenge Reagan's version of the past. The power of his appeal is the great joint confession that we cannot live with our real past, that we not only prefer but need a substitute. Because of that, we will a belief in all his stories.

In fact, Wills argues, America's greatest need is for precisely what Reagan denies it: an awareness not of past myths, but of past reality. "A sense of identity", he writes,

is based on the experience of endurance through shifting circumstances; and since all actual situations up to the present were, by definition, past situations, identity always has to be sought in the past. That is why continuing scrutiny of the real past is so important to human growth.

Wills has written a remarkable book – erudite, impassioned, imaginative, often brilliant. Up to a point, moreover, his argument is not only powerful but persuasive. It helps make comprehensible some of Reagan's own most conspicuous characteristics: his detachment from the day-to-day affairs of government, his obliviousness to detail, his appalling ignorance of basic facts, his penchant for anecdotes, and his easy shifts back and forth between reality and fantasy. It explains, too, some of the reasons for Reagan's remarkable personal popularity. He does embody America's fondest ideas of itself. He does invite the nation to ignore its past flaws and present dilemmas, to enter a genial haze of self-congratulation.

But what effect does all this have on the way

Americans actually behave, either individually or collectively? What effect does it have on public policy? Wills suggests that the effect is paralysing, that it renders society incapable of dealing effectively with its problems or of experiencing real "human growth". That, however, is an assumption for which he offers little evidence. And it is an assumption that cannot be accepted on faith. A case could be made, in fact, that the myths and delusions that Wills so ably chronicles and that Reagan so skillfully employs have had almost no effect at all – either on Reagan's own policies or on the nation's collective behaviour. The evidence Wills himself presents here could support such an argument in countless ways: Reagan's career in Hollywood, this book makes clear, was not the dreamy idyll he now likes to remember. It was a series of pragmatic adjustments to changing circumstances, motivated not by ideology and wish but necessity. Reagan's two terms as Governor of California, Wills admits, were surpri-



singly conventional. Ideology may have helped him win election (although the unpopularity of his opponent was at least as important). But only briefly did myths and symbols play any important role in the way he actually ran the government. His record, according to a reporter who covered him in Sacramento, was "moderate and responsible but undistinguished".

And what of Reagan's record in the White House? Wills devotes only thirty-five pages of this long book to the Reagan presidency, perhaps because his discussion of it does very little to support his larger argument. Reagan's initial victory in 1980, he concedes, was far more a result of Jimmy Carter's unpopularity and the dismal state of the economy than of Reagan's skill as myth-maker. His re-election victory four years later likewise owed more to the economic recovery than to America's imagined innocence.

Wills tries to argue that Reagan's economic policies – with their simplistic faith in the market, their reliance on tax cuts and budget adjustments to stimulate growth, their willingness to tolerate unprecedented deficits – are a product of the President's naive wishfulness. Supply-side theory "fit[s] everything he believed about the American saga, about what 'made us great' before there was any government to cripple the lone pioneer on the frontier". But Reagan was, as Wills admits, a late convert to the supply-side doctrine. The original inspiration for it came not from romantic myth-makers, but from hard-headed right-wing economists and corporate figures interested in tax relief. The idea gathered considerable political (and even some academic) support long before Reagan tried to fuse it with his own ideological message. Wrongheaded as the supply-side doctrine might be, it is grounded in economic theory, past practice, and self-interest – not simply in fantasy and wish.

Wills is perhaps most eloquent and least convincing in describing the aim of Reagan's "Star Wars" programme – a technological fantasy presented to the public as a benign "final solu-

war. The project, Wills writes, "fulfills Reagan's narrative requirement that a single hero (or hero-nation) save the day by a decisive act . . . . What is Star Wars but another, more complex project meant to trace, in lasers and benign nuclear 'searchlights', the image of America itself across the widest screen of all? In fact, Star Wars can more readily be portrayed as nothing of the kind: as the effort of researchers and industrialists to secure lucrative contracts, as an attempt by the military to respond to the perceived Soviet advantage in missile strength, as a ploy to produce a 'bargaining chip' for future arms-control negotiations. The programme, as it has so far developed, bears only a passing resemblance to the magical fantasy Reagan has attempted to present; it is at this point simply another potential ABM system for protecting missile sites. Nor is there evidence that Reagan's extravagant rhetoric has persuaded the public of the value of the project. In the one election in which Star Wars became a significant issue – the 1986 Congressional contest – the Republicans (and Reagan himself) suffered a staggering defeat; Democratic candidates had no reason to fear the wrath of voters when they opposed the Administration on this issue."

Wills completed his book before the current imbroglio over the sale of arms to Iran; and he cannot, of course, be expected to have considered events of which he had no knowledge. Still, the Iran controversy does little to support his argument that mythology determines political behaviour. It would be hard to imagine a more cynically pragmatic series of events than those that culminated in the Iran fiasco. And it is difficult to watch the public response – the dramatic drop in Reagan's popularity, the rapid unravelling of his image of invincibility – without developing doubts about the degree to which Reagan's presumably mythic appeal was ever a phenomenon divorced from the actual results of his policies.

It is possible to argue, in other words, that the exalted American self-image that Wills so effectively and devastatingly describes and that Reagan so lovingly embraces is little more than a rhetorical device, providing a palatable veneer for decisions and impulses grounded not in ideology but in self-interest. One could produce evidence to suggest that Reagan's popularity is only secondarily a result of his success at image-making and is primarily a result of his success (or luck) in presiding over a period of economic growth. One could make a persuasive case that the actions of his administration are consistently, even alarmingly, pragmatic – driven less by the President's naive world-view than by immediate political considerations.

Indeed, one could go further and argue that the belief that Americans are a myth-driven people, the belief that they have a unique ideology that determines much of what they do, may itself be a reflection of the nation's faith in its own exceptionalism. Even those who deplore the myths seem strangely transfixed by them, as unwilling to live without them as they imagine others are unwilling to live without devotion to them. And thus Wills's remarkable exploration of the national psyche (in this book and in others) may be as much a reflection of what it describes as an explication of it.

Yet to argue that an American ideology explains nothing but itself would be as misleading as to argue that it explains everything. It is true that when one examines particular decisions and specific actions, it is usually difficult to identify any clear role for the mythic structure Wills and others like to believe underlies them. But that structure surely exists. It is a persistent feature of national culture and national identity. And at some level – a level that Gary Wills's otherwise impressive book does little to reveal – it almost certainly works to shape not just how Americans talk, but how they behave. Finding that point of connection is among the considerable tasks remaining to those who wish to define the "meaning" of America. *The State of America* by Trevor F. Fishlock, first published in 1986, has now appeared in paperback (194pp. Faber, 0-571-14873-7, £3.95). As foreign correspondent of *The Times* based in New York, Fishlock travelled throughout the United States, and his book includes chapters on Alaska, Florida, Chicago

## Trying to help themselves, themselves, themselves

### Elaine Showalter

MICHAEL G. KENNY  
The Passion of Ansel Bourne: Multiple personality in American culture  
250pp. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. \$24.95 (paperback, \$14.95). 087474 572.1

With Jekyll and Hyde in mind, we tend to think of the nineteenth century as the age of split personalities, doubles who solve their sexual and social problems by neatly dividing mind and body, good and evil, upstairs and downstairs. Dr Jekyll's pronouncement that "man is not truly one but truly two", could be the slogan of the Romantic and Victorian infatuation with duality. But even Jekyll foresaw that in the more complicated social environments of the twentieth century, two personalities might not be enough to get a man through the week, and that a single body would have to shelter a batch of "multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" which shared the ever-increasing burden of multiple social roles.

In the United States, according to this study by Michael Kenny, a social anthropologist at Simon Fraser University, mere duality always seemed insufficient to accommodate the competitive and contradictory ambitions of an expanding nation; Americans eager to be all that they could be split into multiple selves that in some recent cases have numbered as many as a hundred mutually amnesiac "personality fragments". Kenny views the phenomenon of multiple personality as an American "idiom of distress", a socially produced syndrome born of Puritanism, evangelical religion, changes in women's roles, and financial stress. Focusing on medical cases, he also includes religious converts and spiritualists among his five major case-histories, exploring the different contexts, whether theological or medical, in which their symptoms were defined.

The nineteenth-century American selves Kenny assembles are indeed a curious bunch of mystics, mediums, spirit-rappers and trance-speakers, worthy of Henry James's *The Bostonians*. Four of the five subjects are women, for despite the male doubles of Victorian fiction, most of the medical accounts of multiple personality describe women acting out roles forbidden to females. Although Kenny makes only minimal connections to the histories of psychoanalysis or feminism, his book might well be read as a study of American female hysteria, a Yankee counterpart to Charcot's hysterical queens at the Salpêtrière

or to Freud and Breuer's cases in Vienna.

Ansel Bourne, the only male subject in the book, thus seems out of place as its titular figure, the more so because his story is relatively passionless and dull. (In the cover photograph, the high-domed Bourne looks already reversible, like one of those Victorian cartoons that becomes another face when you turn it upside-down.) He was a carpenter from Rhode Island who in 1857 had what was called a conversion experience, which struck him blind, deaf and dumb for eighteen days. Upon recovery he became an itinerant preacher; but in 1887, after struggling with a difficult second marriage, financial problems and religious doubts, he disappeared and was eventually discovered in Philadelphia, running a small business under the name of Albert John Brown. William James hypnotized him on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, and his case became well known among psychologists, but in neither of his conversions is it very difficult to understand Bourne's recourse to an alternative self.

The women, however, are much more florid and inventive. Lenora Piper, for example, was a celebrated medium who reached the height of her fame in the 1890s. While she occasionally was taken over by the spirits of Longfellow and Bach, Piper's favourite control was an Indian maiden named Chlorine. Her downfall came in 1909 when she claimed to deliver messages from the deceased Richard Hodgson, a prominent psychical researcher who had often expressed the wish to hasten his death in order to set up spiritualist communications from Beyond. Mrs Piper's impersonation of Hodgson, according to William James, involved "so much repetition, hesitation, irrelevance, unintelligibility, so much obvious groping and fishing and plausible covering up of false tracks" that her reputation was shattered.

Kenny argues that she believed in her voices, but his discussion of her case would be more persuasive with reference to the work of Laurence Moore and Alex Owen, both of whom have analysed the way in which spiritualist mediumship gave silenced nineteenth-century women an alternative voice. While men had pioneered the field as prophets, by the late nineteenth century women had taken over as mediums in what became an alternative feminist religion, circumventing male clerical hierarchies and exploiting feminine "passivity" as a pipeline to the divine.

By the turn of the century, multiple personality had become the product of covert and emotional interactions between frustrated female hysteria, a Yankee counterpart to Charcot's hysterical queens at the Salpêtrière

was Dr Morton Prince, a prosperous nerve specialist who treated two of the most famous cases, which Kenny discusses in his book. In *The Dissociation of a Personality* (1906), Prince wrote about Clara Norton Fowler, a twenty-five-year-old student of literature who came to him in 1898 with neurasthenic symptoms. Under hypnosis, she developed three personalities, which he called B1, B11 and BIV and thought of as the Saint, the Devil and the Woman. While B11 was anxious, rigid and neurotic, B111, who named herself "Sally Beauchamp", was vivacious, high-spirited and amoral. Sally was also openly enamoured of Dr Prince: "I love you always, you know always, but when you are strong and splendid", she wrote to him. Prince's daughter recalled that when Sally "was too obstreperous, odours of ether would emerge from the office", as he attempted to "subjugate this mischievous nature". Despite Sally's wishes, Prince would not allow her to become the dominant personality; a unified "Miss Beauchamp" developed via hypnosis and after completing her treatment with Prince, she attended Radcliffe College and married another prominent Boston neurologist.

While the case of Miss Beauchamp was turned into a Broadway play by David Belasco, the case of "B.C.A." is far more compelling, even in the choppy, confusing and incomplete account Kenny has assembled from her autobiographical writings and her letters to Prince in the Harvard Medical Library. "B.C.A." (actually Nellie Bean) was a forty-year-old widow in 1898 when she first came to Prince suffering from depression, insomnia, headaches and odd behaviour. Like Clara Fowler, she was intellectual, literary and frustrated by the domestic submission enjoined by society. Her "multiple personalities" were all too clearly facets of her repression and her rebellion. "A" was morbid, helpless, prudish and terrified of living without a man. "B", however, was daring and independent. She wore white instead of widow's weeds, enjoyed "fun and a gay time", smoked, danced and flirted with men and even allowed one Mr Hopkins to kiss her. She was alarmed by "A"'s anxieties and by her schemes to remarry: "Why, if she got married I would be married too I suppose, and I won't. I can't."

Under Prince's treatment by hypnosis "C" emerged as a compromise personality which resolved these contradictions. Mrs Bean never remarried, but spent the remaining years of her life as Prince's devoted research assistant and typist. It seems a convenient resolution for Prince, and a prosaic fate for the Brontëish

"B", who had pleaded not to be cured into normality: "I am afraid I am going to be a woman just like A & C. I don't want to, Dr Prince . . . . I want to be just what I have always been – just 'B' free as the wind, no body, no soul, no heart. I don't want to love people because if one loves one must suffer – that is what it means to be a woman – to love and suffer."

In his final chapter, Kenny comments sardonically on the contemporary epidemic – or vogue – of MPD (Multiple Personality Syndrome). In 1984 an International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality was formed, with the celebrated "Eve" (formerly of the Three Faces) sitting on the Board; it now publishes a scholarly journal called *Dissociation*. A patients' advocacy group has its own publication, called *Speaking for Ourselves*. Bestsellers about MPD, such as Flora Rheta Schreiber's *Sybil*, share the racks with American self-help books like *How to Be Your Own Best Friend*; therapists treating MPD victims search for the "Inner Self Helper", who knows the other personalities, and can convince them as the chairman of a committee would. As the roles demanded of women increase, in these post-feminist days, so too do female personalities: by 1975, when her identity became public, "Eve" herself had "multiplied like rabbits", reaching a grand total of twenty-two and beating Sybil's previous record of sixteen. While not always spurious, Kenny believes, the phenomenon of multiple personality is always a response to cultural messages, and even created to a large degree by the psychiatric establishment (and its lunatic and occult fringes). Kenny dourly predicts that MPD has "indefinite growth potential" in *fin-de-siècle* America, where there is so much from which to be dissociated.

Unfortunately, Michael Kenny's own multiple academic personalities jostle for precedence throughout the book, making his narratives frustratingly hard to follow. A the anthropologist, B the biographer and C the cynic seem unaware of each other's presence, so that the same examples are reused to different purpose, while the book's tone and format change drastically from chapter to chapter. In lieu of an Inner Self Helper, a tough editor might have made these fascinating stories much more accessible.

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# Superwoman and The Child

## Mary Lefkowitz

JOYCE ANTLER  
*Lucy Sprague Mitchell: The making of a modern woman*  
 436pp. Yale University Press. £30.  
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In the Wellesley College Chapel a gleaming white marble relief shows, with exquisite sentimentality, the college's beloved second president, young Alice Freeman, in an academic gown, gently pushing a younger woman onward to a distant goal; the younger woman holds a lamp to guide her in her quest for the truth. Miss Freeman left the Presidency in 1887 to marry a Harvard Professor, George Herbert Palmer, who, though unwilling himself to leave Cambridge, allowed his wife to spend twelve weeks each year as Dean of Women at the University of Chicago. There she met Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878-1967), who was to become one of Mrs Palmer's most influential protégées.

As a daughter of a prominent Chicago businessman, vastly rich by the standards of the time, Lucy had been expected to devote her adult life to the service of the family, either by marrying a man who might help to increase or preserve the family's wealth, or by remaining at home to serve as nurse to her parents. Her father, who spent most of his life slowly dying of tuberculosis, demanded the constant service of a female relative, since it would have been wrong to expose an outsider to contagion. But instead of spending her adult life emptying the cuspidors, Lucy insisted on being able to finish her secondary school education. After this she was rescued by the timely intervention of Mrs Palmer, who knew the family well, and assured Lucy's parents that their daughter could live with her in Cambridge while attending Radcliffe, the women's "annexe" of Harvard.

Although her family resented it, Lucy remained after graduation under the protection of the Palmers. When in 1902 Mrs Palmer suddenly died, Lucy rejected an offer of marriage from the self-important, yet curiously dependent Professor Palmer; then, after a period of wavering, she took the radical step of becoming the first Dean of Women at Berkeley; her mentor in this case was the President of that

university, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, who had met Lucy at the Palmers' house in Cambridge. During her time in California she met and, though only after much correspondence and indecision, married an Economics professor, Wesley Mitchell. Her departure from the deanship was marked by the enactment of a Parthenon, "The Spirit of Maidenhood", with a cast of almost 500 women, in a masque representing the ideals of American women's culture that she, with varying effectiveness, sought to achieve in her own life.

The Mitchells settled in New York, where Lucy's wealth and social position enabled her to combine home and career, with homes in the city and in the country, until her husband's death in 1948. As founder of an experimental bureau of education, a school for children, and as author of books on children, Lucy managed to make a lasting impression on primary schooling in America. By all accounts an inspiring teacher, she was of course a progressive, who abandoned the ordinary curriculum, and encouraged children to enjoy and participate in what they read; she wrote her own book of appropriate stories for children, without the envy and cruelty that characterize traditional tales. All her life she studied and recorded patterns of children's speech, and even in her sixties toured the country by bus in an attempt to show herself and her students its "human geography".

It is possible to discern from the great mass of biographical material here assembled from



Lucy Sprague Mitchell teaching a class at the Bank Street College of Education, taken from the book reviewed here.

letters, diaries and interviews by her perhaps too sympathetic and industrious biographer, a sense of the intellectual determination that propelled Lucy through life. She enjoyed

dressing in gypsy costume, and reading out loud to guests English versions of haunting Romanin ballads about loneliness, love and death. Many admired her, but not everyone liked her; her own children thought that she was more interested in The Child than in them as individuals. She loved her husband, but seemed from the beginning more interested in her own needs than in his, complaining in her early letters of his lack of "personality" and "masculinity"; Mitchell himself was perhaps more easily satisfied, since he claimed to seek from union with his intelligent and independently wealthy bride "serene happiness and a sense of heightened efficiency".

The notion of the modern woman exemplified by Lucy Sprague Mitchell—daughter, educator, wife and mother—is impressive in the range of its accomplishment, but in many ways terrifying to contemplate: what would she have done without her large inheritance? her husband's calm self-confidence? her own boundless energy and determination, and physical strength? Even with all these assets she remained throughout her life uncertain about the direction her work should take, and found herself unable to comfort members of her family who were seriously ill. Can a life like hers be lived, like the lives of many successful men, only at the expense of others, whose lives might arguably be less valuable to society? This question, posed by Mrs Palmer, evaded by Mrs Mitchell, remains unanswered in our own time.

## The Colonial—Notes for a life by LOUIS SIMPSON

Among the legacies of a colonial culture is the habit of thinking of creative sources as somehow remote from itself. —F. O. Matthiessen

There is a beach with white sand  
 and big waves rolling in.  
 I am picking up seashells

of all colors and shapes . . .  
 pieces of flint, and the seeds called horse-eyes,  
 trying to gather them all.

This is the famous singer, Caruso  
 as a clown. Here he is again  
 as a soldier, with helmet and sword.

Here is the garden scene,  
 and this is the phantom ship,  
 and the woman dancing with her shadow.

Here is the one who looks like your mother,  
 "Pons as Lakme",  
 and again, as a blonde, "Lucia".

People still spoke of the Great War.  
 When they were travelling in Europe,  
 and visiting one of the trenches

she saw part of a soldier's uniform  
 in the trench, and picked it up.  
 There was a hand lying under it.

Aunt Edith and Aunt May  
 rocking and fanning on the veranda  
 Now and then one of them speaks

something to do with the servants,  
 how stupid and lazy they are.  
 A tram goes by in the South Camp road

clanging its bell. A John Crow  
 seems to hang from a cloud.  
 Trees rustle in the breeze from the sea

A bugle sounds in the distance.  
 "Charge for the guns!" he said,  
 and the battle of Waterloo

The man lying in bed  
 is my uncle. He used to be mayor,  
 but the most important thing

about Bertie is his leg.  
 I try to make out the place  
 where it should be. It's not everyone

who has lost a leg in an earthquake . . .  
 had a whole building fall on him  
 and lived to tell the tale.

When every head is bent diligently  
 over its prep, all of a sudden  
 there's the braying of a donkey

and we all turn around, knowing  
 what to expect . . . Johnny Maguire  
 risen from his desk, erect,

and waving it up and down.  
 "Ah cyan't read an ah cyan't write  
 but ah cyan multiply!"

The hurricane flooded the gully.  
 The body of a black man lay by the fence  
 covered with a sheet of zinc.

There is still a hollow place  
 where it used to be. By lamplight  
 the drowned man shines and breathes.

The waves . . . white lines of foam,  
 a steamer slowly turning  
 to go around Port Royal.

And I am waiting to go,  
 and there are only leaves  
 in the wind, and a lizard rustling

## Lifting the lid

### Nicholas Hiley

DAVID HOOPER  
*Official Secrets: The use and abuse of the Act*  
 199pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95.

RICHARD V. HALL  
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JOHN WEST  
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 300pp. Cape. £18.

CHAPMAN PINCHER  
*Whodunnit: The labyrinth of treason*  
 199pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £13.95.

At a time of acute rivalry with Germany, the greatest mistake in the history of the British Secret Service was made on its foundation in October 1909, and its effects remain with us today.

At a time of acute rivalry with Germany, the head of War Office section MO5, was given responsibility for organizing a new administrative bureau modelling both espionage abroad and counter-espionage at home. Following the recommendations of an earlier working party, he had created a highly secret organization, called the Secret Service Bureau, which engaged in all covert operations Whitehall would not only be freed from the necessity of dealing with spies, but direct evidence could be obtained that we were having any dealings with them.

The Foreign Office thus got its wish for a system of spies which could be "disowned

when necessary", and, as Phillip Knightley has pointed out, Britain was provided with "an intelligence organisation that officially did not exist". However, the 1909 reorganization went even further than this. Conscious of the political risk from even indirect association with espionage, the Liberal government waived its right to close supervision of the Bureau in return for concrete results. It reviewed the arrangements after a short probationary period, but then Cabinet Ministers quite simply stopped asking what the Secret Service organizations were up to. In 1911, for instance, when the Germans arrested a British agent in Bremen, the Secretary of State for War calmly advised the Foreign Secretary that he could certainly make a request to the Bureau for details of the operation, but that "it may be best not to make it" if they were to deny all responsibility. The choice was simple, and the operation was duly disowned.

Nearly eighty years afterwards we are still living with the consequences of this political cowardice. Yet its results were not only inevitable but also obvious within a decade.

First, if a government department is permitted to operate in complete secrecy, without careful direction and without close supervision, it will naturally determine its own responsibilities. By 1916 the officers of the counter-espionage branch, by that time called M15, had extended their operations to the surveillance of pacifists, trade unionists and left-wing activists, entirely on their own initiative. They continued to develop their interception of correspondence, tapping of telephones, and recruiting of agents until, in 1917, one American liaison officer found it "almost impossible to get anything in writing as to the detailed working of any one of the various departments, for the reason that each Department has grown up very slowly around the personality of one man, and he has made his own rules".

Second, any government department which operates in such secrecy and with such autonomy, even in the matter of pensions and pro-

motion, will be peculiarly vulnerable to internal factions and rivalries. When these become acute, and because the rule of secrecy allows of no appeal, frustrated officials at all levels will seek to publicize their supposed grievances through contacts with friendly journalists. There is nothing either surprising or novel in this. As early as 1919 the civilian Director of Intelligence, Sir Basil Thomson, had begun leaking Special Branch papers and M15 reports to a former *Daily Mail* writer called Sidney Felstead, so that, to M15's disgust, they could be used in a book which magnified his role in wartime counter-espionage.

Finally, if the relationship between a government and its Secret Service consists in complete secrecy of operations on one side and complete freedom of dissociation on the other, then legal controls must quickly be found to guarantee this confidentiality. The basis of these controls remains an Official Secrets Act passed as early as 1911, and an advisory committee formed in 1913 to circulate editors with bulletins on the handling of sensitive subjects, now known as the "D-Notice" Committee. Given these simple relationships, which are built into the constitution of the British Secret Service, it is truly remarkable that the British public should continue to be surprised by their natural consequences.

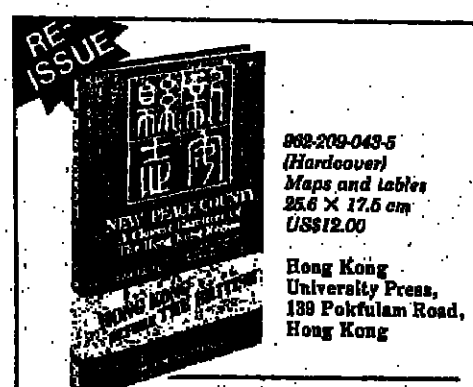
Why, for instance, should we be shocked to hear that in the 1970s M15 enlarged its operations to include the Prime Minister's office, when this was a predictable consequence of its great autonomy? Why is there concern that officers of M15 and M16 frequently collaborate with writers such as Rupert Allason and Harry Chapman Pincher, when this form of public appeal is essential to the continuance of the Secret Service in its present form? How can people be surprised that legal action has been taken against the BBC over Duncan Campbell's *Secret Society* programmes, or against Peter Wright over his proposed book *Spycatcher*, when these pose such an obvious threat to the government's freedom of dis-

sociation from covert operations?

Part of the reason is surely the great poverty of theory in the criticism of secret affairs in Britain. David Hooper's new book, *Official Secrets: The use and abuse of the Act*, is unfortunately no exception. He takes as his subject all those sections of that infamous statute which do not specifically concern acts of espionage, and his narrative certainly makes interesting reading. The Official Secrets Act of 1911 and its amending Act of 1920 were initially applied in a bewildering variety of circumstances. We read, for instance, of a man prosecuted in 1935 who, "for reasons which one can only guess at", gave a false address in a lonely-hearts advertisement for the *Daily Telegraph*; of another man, convicted in 1943 of careless talk in a public house, whose occupation is given simply a "drinker"; of two Oxford undergraduates in 1958 imprisoned for three months after publishing an article in a student journal, concluding most sensibly that "the irresponsibility bred and sheltered by the Official Secrets Act is uncontrollable".

The history of the Act over its first fifty years in fact confirms the suspicion that it is peculiarly self-defining. The Under-Secretary of State for War managed to rush the original legislation through a virtually empty House of Commons one Friday afternoon in 1911, on the understanding that the government "were bound in honour not to employ the Act against editors or other persons connected with the Press". Yet within three years it was being used to threaten editors. In 1920 the Attorney-General promised that the new amendments, with their alarming extension of powers, would leave the press as free as before, but by 1930 they were being used to threaten journalists who published confidential material. In 1936 the same official stated that the 1911 Act could not be used in cases of accidental indiscretion, but within twenty years such prosecutions were commonplace.

During the 1960s there were indications that this indiscriminate growth might have stopped,



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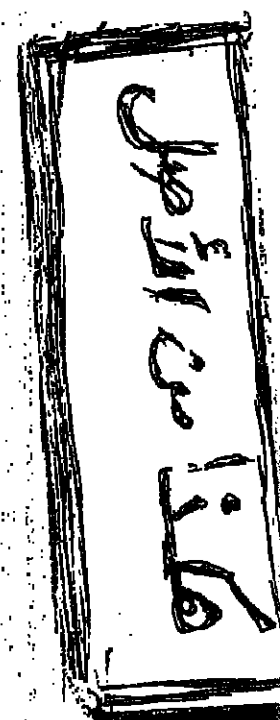
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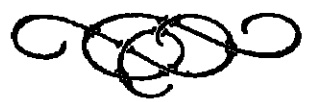
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and by 1972, in the wake of the failed *Sunday Telegraph* prosecution, the Franks Committee was even prepared to advocate measures to limit its application considerably. Their report helped to curb the more bizarre uses of the Act, but few people are now as confident as Mr Hooper that it marked "the beginning of the end for the Act". Even fewer will support his belief that an early repeal of the notorious Section 2, with its penalties for any unauthorized use of official information, might be accompanied "by a complete revision of the practice relating to secrecy". As he himself points out, "no previous Attorney-General has used Section 2 more than the present incumbent, Sir Michael Havers QC", a man whose eight years in the post have scarcely seen a lessening of enthusiasm for official secrecy.

Indeed, as his narrative continues to the present day it becomes clear that Hooper has chosen to fight on the wrong ground, for the Act is just one symptom of official secrecy. The secrecy itself contains many different strands. The first developed from the professionalization of the Civil Service in the second half of the nineteenth century, which fostered the concept of official ownership of official information. The second came in the rapid growth of the press and news reporting after 1880, which made that ownership seem under threat. Finally, after 1909, there arose a need for the government to protect its delicate relationship with the Secret Service.

All these elements existed before the passing of the Official Secrets Act of 1911 and, because British governments still cannot come to terms with the vast expansion of information in the twentieth century, they will endure long after it has gone. As a lawyer Hooper is satisfied to support "a statute that protected the secrets that really matter", which would be "severe in its application... but used only very sparingly", but how would that have influenced the Peter Wright case, for instance? Here the Official Secrets Act waits in reserve, but ahead of it march an injunction against his publisher, a law of confidence action against the man himself, another injunction against the *Guardian* and *Observer*, an action for criminal contempt under that injunction against the *Independent*, *London Daily News* and *Evening Standard*, and various interpretations of the sub judice rules to control discussion in the House of Commons. It is clear in retrospect that the Franks Committee simply forced governments to change their ground, and that the revision of official secrecy no longer depends on the revision of the Official Secrets Act.

This same feeling of digging in the wrong place grows as one reads Richard Hall's new "Penguin Special" covering the Wright case, *A Spy's Revenge*. Hall reported the trial for the *Guardian*, and his detailed account has the intense, close, exhausting air of a hot courtroom in the afternoon during a long trial. This works in its favour over some sections, and the book is full of interesting episodes, but the habit of never stepping back from the problem, and never opening out the debate, eventually stifles his argument. In particular, Hall abandons one of the central problems in this case of *Attorney General of the UK vs Heinemann and Another*. As the book's cover observes, the British government "stirred up a hornet's nest" in trying to silence this former MI5 officer, so the question naturally arises: "why were they so keen to stop the publication of Peter Wright's memoirs?" Hall unfortunately cannot solve this problem. He confesses that he does not know "why no compromise with Wright was possible", and can only suggest that it was avoided to "show the Americans that the British were better than them at keeping secrets". However, as he admits, this does nothing to explain the scale of the official campaign, which he believes involved stories planted in the London press by "government media minders", and an attempt to manipulate the *Daily Express* in support of an appeal.

There was a similar response from journalists in Britain, who agreed that the government must be taking action on behalf of MI5, either to prevent Wright from describing its problems in embarrassing detail, or simply to enforce its supposed tradition of honourable silence. However, all such explanations miss the vital point that the government's policy of cover operations threatens the 1909 agreement, and thus threatens the British government's repu-

dom of disassociation. The Wright case thus involves that political danger which every British government in the last eighty years has fought to contain, and the government was acting entirely in its own interest when it sent the Cabinet Secretary to the Wright trial, where he steadfastly refused to admit even that MI6 exists.

Hall's account of the trial supports this interpretation by revealing the strange history of Wright's 100,000-word manuscript *Spycatcher*. He presents Wright as a methodological technician, who retired from MI5 in 1976, "carrying the burden of the dislike, even hatred of many of his colleagues in MI5 and MI6", and with a pension of only £2,000 per annum. Wright campaigned for two years for a more generous allowance, but it remained as an apparent snub from his former employers. There is nothing new in this. In 1940, for instance, the Deputy Director of MI5 was sacked by Churchill, and granted a pension of only



Moholy-Nagy's "Superman" or the "tree of eyes", first published in Hackett's *Illustrated* and taken here from Moholy-Nagy: Painting, photography, film by Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, translated by Janet Seligman (150pp. Lund Humphries. £12.95. 0 85331 513 2).

£440, deliberately calculated from his army rank before joining the Security Service in 1912.

In 1978 Wright began the preparation of a dossier detailing the theories which he had about MI5, and attempted to bring it before the Prime Minister. This failed, and so he agreed to collaborate with the journalist Chapman Pincher on his book *Their Trade Is Treachery*, published in 1981. When this relationship soured he turned to television, and finally agreed to collaborate with a ghostwriter on a book for publication. According to Hall this project became "a pulp for his analyses, theories, on the Russian threat to the West, the articulation of the beliefs of a persevering group within Britain's MI5 and MI6". It included speculations about the Soviet penetration of MI5, details of an MI5 operation, ten years before, which Wright described as "the plot to destabilise the Wilson government", and, finally, complaints about his pension. According to Mr Justice Powell, who has had to read it, the whole is presented "in a style which seems more appropriate to the *Boy's Own Paper* or *Biggles Flying Omnibus*". However, its publication would clearly have raised questions about MI5's ability to regulate its own affairs.

But to appreciate Wright's strange grievances more fully we must turn to *Molehunt: The hunt story of the Soviet spy in MI5* ("Nigel West" is Rupert Allason's pseudonym). West writes both clearly and interestingly. The book eventually founders in detail, but it carries the reader through the first fifty pages like a novel, and into a number of strange characters, such as the dandy and Russian-born Gouzenko, a defector who settled near Toron-

to in the 1950s, and "would only appear on television wearing a pillow-case with eye-holes". Yet the book also reveals the unpleasant persona which rucked MI5 for ten years during the 1960s and 1970s, and is even now burning in print.

This first developed in 1962, when the Russian defector Anatoli Golitsyn was interviewed in Washington by an MI5 officer named Arthur Martin. As Golitsyn expounded his grand, lying theory of Soviet penetration of the West, Martin's suspicions hardened into a belief that there was treachery at the highest level in MI5 itself. It is instructive to take subsequent events in its own Deputy Director-General, Graham Mitchell, under intensive observation. As an operation codenamed "Peters", he was reluctantly spied on by his colleagues until, one day, the hidden camera in his office observed him sitting alone with his head in his hands, before crying out "Why are you doing this to me?" Shortly afterwards he asked to be allowed to retire, but to the "Peters" team this indicated only that he had been warned about their operation. They urged the Director-General of MI5, Roger Hollis, to allow them to interrogate Mitchell before his retirement, and, when he quite naturally refused, made Hollis himself the principal suspect. In 1964 they established an ultra-secret committee, codenamed "Pearcy", under the chairmanship of Peter Wright.

This internal investigation quite simply bagged Mitchell, and the lack of effective political oversight meant that these factions endured. The weight of available evidence would not be sufficient to make most people change their brand of soap powder, but Wright and Mann headed a group convinced that Hollis was guilty, and eagerly seized on the slightest confirmation. Most sources agree that Hollis was neither very clever nor imaginative, but shortly before his retirement in 1965, he led Wright into his office and asked "Why do you think I am a spy?" This immediately became evidence of his quite staggering subtlety. Eventually the deficiencies in the evidence themselves became evidence. In 1971 an assessment of Anthony Blunt's original confession judged it had been carefully fabricated to avoid naming new traitors, so that his false name Hollis could itself become a shocking indictment. Those were the prejudices which were leaked to Chapman Pincher for publication, and which have brought Richard Hall to urge that Wright's manuscript be published in order "that the arguments and thought processes of those behind Pincher could be brought into the open for scrutiny". However, the fact that Hollis has not been the only one to venture into print.

As Nigel West reveals, Graham Mitchell was finally interrogated in 1965, but his replies were dismissed as "stock answers". In consequence a group of retired and embittered MI5 officers eventually decided to publish their suspicions as "a comprehensive dossier, in the guise of an apparently impartial history". They hoped that this project, ironically codenamed "Worst Case", would break Mitchell's resistance if he could be "offered the opportunity to confess in return for a solemn undertaking that no word of his admission would be released until after his death". Allason generously lent his pseudonym to this filthy business, which resulted in the book *A Matter of Trust: MI5 1945-72*, published in 1982. This was not to belabour Mitchell through ill-health to his death two years later, but apparently Allason moved by such matters, for he ends his book with the plaintive comment that "his admission would have sufficed".

However, a third group of Secret Service officers has now sought to break cover with the careful exercise of damage-limitation. In the last section of his long and interesting book entitled *The Secrets of the Service: High Intelligence and Communist Subversion 1945-57*, Anthony Glees reveals himself as spokesman both for the Hollis family, and for a group of "senior officers in MI5 and MI6", who are "convinced that Roger Hollis was totally innocent of the charges made against him".

Dr Glees is a thorough historian who shuns his evidence with great clarity. His section on Hollis, which is designed to clear his own, easily dismisses the double-edged

about the warning sent to Donald Maclean in 1951—a principal plank in the case against both Hollis and Mitchell. However the narrative quickly turns into an argument against the closer political oversight of MI5, which seems strangely out of place.

Glees believes that intelligence organizations are "good or bad" according to their efficiency of operation, and thus presents the current problem as "how can MI5's morale be restored?" We are assured that in most cases the bad press that MI5 has received is not its own fault, and that it springs from the recent "general lack of self-esteem" which has brought criticism for all Britain's great institutions. Glees admits that MI5 has probably been guilty of "excessive secrecy", but assures us that overall political control has always existed "in the person of the Home Secretary of the day". All that is required, we are told, is the appointment of "an official spokesman" for MI5, the release of a set of "well-ordered" historical records to illustrate its past, and a better appreciation of the fact that MI5 "is, after all, the public's security service". In this way the secret policeman on the beat will apparently become the friendly figure he used to be, and "the liberal essence of British security work" will be preserved. But few people will be encouraged to follow Glees down this path. As David Hooper's book concludes, we have little reason to believe "that Whitehall will put its own house in order and that the citizen will be sufficiently protected by procedures voluntarily introduced by government departments". The problems which beset MI5 are rooted in too much secrecy, not too little.

It is instructive to look finally at the type of ideas which grow in the darkness of this official secrecy, through Chapman Pincher's new book *Traitors: The labyrinths of treason*. Pincher presents this as a pioneering, theoretical study of double-agents and moles, but in fact his simple conviction that loyalty, patriotism and race are somehow inseparable has a long pedigree in the Secret Service. In a lecture written for Chief Constables in the 1920s Sir

Vernon Kell, Director-General of MI5 for thirty years, described his secret register of "half-hearted hybrids" and naturalized aliens "who have furtively but quite legally changed their foreign names by deed poll for the obvious purpose of concealing their foreign origin". In Kell's day the world remained conveniently divided between the British and "those who hammer at our gates", but for Pincher the battle has turned, the enemy is in the camp, and among the forces of order "there has never been treachery on such a scale".

Pincher reveals himself to be a close follower of Anatoli Golitsyn and Peter Wright, convinced that the strength of the West is being sapped by numerous subversives. At his trial Wright sought to expose the "fundamental weaknesses in British society", through which the British Establishment "was, en masse, penetrated by the Russians". He estimated that as many as 200 might remain, and so Pincher's new book aims both to foster "the resurgence of patriotism and national pride", and to train those loyal to the British government in the recognition of traitors. On our behalf he examines dozens of double-agents and traitors in an attempt to locate the mark of Cain which God has set upon them. Yet the common factor continually eludes him. Could it be social background? No, "traitors come from all walks of life". Could it be a quirk of handwriting? No, the range of styles "would seem to be too varied". Could it be sexual impotence? Or homosexuality—in which case we could locate them using women, "who are usually perceptive in this respect"? Alas, probably not. Could it be a combination of "physical characteristics"? No, unfortunately, for "traitors come in all shapes and sizes". Indeed, all that Pincher comes up with is the curious information that habitual traitors walk in a funny way—"forever looking over their shoulders or taking other precautions, such as staring in shop windows, to ensure that they are not being followed". Yet beware, these could equally be habitual readers of Chapman Pincher.

However, despite its unconscious humour this mammoth catalogue of treason does illustrate the continuing importance of the concepts of loyalty and subversion to the political right. In a recent piece for the *Telegraph Sunday Magazine* Pincher described the force of his own patriotism. This, we learn, forms "an umbilical attachment" to Britain, and yet is clearly no more than a selective attachment to its inhabitants. As he makes plain, his fear of being "in any way subservient to aliens" includes coloured immigrants, who are after all "so different from me and mine", and it naturally extends to communists, following a sudden revelation in the 1930s "that, in the event of a successful revolution, Britain would first have to be governed from Moscow".

His new book adds to the list of those to whom he owes no loyalty. The typical Soviet "agent of influence", we discover, operates "under the usual fraudulent cover of being a 'peace-loving liberal'". Such people are established in our universities, our schools, "right down to primary level", and particularly in our news media, where they constantly criticize the United States. How does one detect their hidden bias as television commentators?—"one senses it". How does one detect their gloating after acts of terrorism?—"it can be imagined". Yet he reserves his special fury for "pacifists and civil libertarians". These people are beyond the pale not only because they "interfere with the nation's capabilities", but also because, according to Pincher, they openly support the Soviet Union—a significant statement, since he believes that all political activists working in support of a foreign country must be classed as traitors. To him these people are simply pawns of the Soviet *Spetsnaz* infiltration units, which, he informs us darkly, regularly practise attacks on a mock-up of 10 Downing Street. But surely the Prime Minister's office is ready for them? After all, it was warned about the danger over seventy years ago by Maurice Hankey, the future Cabinet Secretary, who noted that German aliens in London

would not require a very extensive organisation or very considerable numbers to attack the houses of nearly all Members of the Cabinet and of the principal Administrative Officers of the State. A good deal of harm could be done even at 10 Downing Street by half-a-dozen desperate men armed with knives or clubs, before sufficient force was available to deal with them.

Yet perhaps Pincher is right to worry—after all the contemporary Prime Minister remained "entirely unconvinced".

It seems what we need now is a thorough demystification of the Secret Service. A. J. P. Taylor began this process several years ago by identifying the fallacy where "a statement of fact in a secret document is regarded as necessarily truer and an argument as necessarily wiser than one made by a politician or journalist in public". As most matters of high policy depend on simple principles and common knowledge, he formulated "Taylor's Law", which states that "The Foreign Office knows no secrets". To this, one could add a further "law", stating that "At no time in history have the heads of the Secret Service been better informed than the Editor of *The Times*".

Indeed, all that needs to be done to demystify the Secret Service is to remember that its operation is no different from that of a newspaper, for it exists principally to collect, edit and circulate information. Its assessments are no more accurate than those of a newspaper, and its reports should be treated in just the same way, for they contain the same mixture of fact and fiction, spiced with self-interest. An attempt by MI5 to discredit a government is no more or less likely to succeed than an attempt by a newspaper, although both are disturbing. Newspaper contacts with politicians are no less manipulative than those of MI5, so why should Chapman Pincher talk of "parliamentary parties... penetrated by MI5"? And finally, when we have demystified the Secret Service, we can at last dismantle the disreputable bargain under which it has operated since 1909, and lift the repressive secrecy which that engenders.

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## Only human

David Miller

J. BUDZISZEWSKI  
*The Resurrection of Nature: Political theory and the human character*  
218pp. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. \$24.40.

08014 1900 X  
STEPHEN D. HUDSON  
*Human Character and Morality: Reflections from the history of ideas*  
164pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £11.95. 07102 07709

CHRISTOPHER J. BERRY  
*Human Nature*  
162pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £6.95). 0333 37523 8

These three books are united in their attempt to present "human nature" as having a major explanatory role in moral and political theory. Let us call this view naturalism. For naturalism to be an interesting possibility, two things must be true. First, we must be able to provide empirical evidence that human nature is sufficiently invariant across cultures and types of social organization to be taken as a premiss in arguments seeking to justify moral and political ideals. Second, the fixed elements that we discover must be substantial enough to do some useful work in this role. It is not enough to be told that all human beings use language and die without adequate supplies of food; we must have richer information about, for instance, people's characteristic motives and capacities.

Naturalism has had a long innings in moral and political theory, but is often now regarded as discredited. This discrediting occurred in two phases. The first was occasioned by the rise of historical thinking in the first half of the nineteenth century, exemplified in the work of Hegel, Marx and the younger Mill. The upshot was a bifurcated conception of human nature. On the one hand, there was basic human nature, invariant across all historical periods, but for the same reason rudimentary; on the other, there was developed human nature, as it had emerged through a succession of historical stages, culminating in the present (or, in Marx's case, the future) period. It was developed human nature that provided the grounding for moral and political recommendations: thus we find Mill confining his defence of representative government explicitly to "civilized" peoples. But since the pattern of history was determinate and irreversible, such a grounding was perfectly adequate.

The second phase began when confidence in this latter belief evaporated. If history was no longer the story of human development from infancy to adulthood, then there was no longer any way of placing different manifestations of human nature on an ascending scale. All that could be said was that human nature took on different forms in the urban village and the European city, in the Japan of the Samurai and the America of the frontier. From this it seemed to follow that the concept could play no independent role in moral and political argument. We were faced with irreducible value choices between modes of life, and it was bad faith to believe that we could be helped in making them by appeal to the supposed essential properties of human beings.

Thus the way lay open for the various forms of subjectivism, relativism and conventionalism with which we are all familiar. But for some there was another possibility. Might it not be possible to build a theory on rudimentary human nature, that is, on those basic features of human beings that were demonstrably invariant across cultures? Prominent here were theories of Kantian provenance that took as central the human capacities to reason and to choose, and sought to derive substantive moral and political conclusions from these capacities alone. But this strategy was never very promising. All of its practitioners (of whom the most eminent in recent years has been John Rawls) can be charged with smuggling into their arguments culturally specific assumptions – for instance, about the kinds of goods that people enjoy having. The barrage of criticism along these lines that Rawls's project has attracted is such that he has now retreated to describing his theory as a "systematization of ideas found in

"the public culture of a constitutional democracy" – thereby conceding its relative character.

None of the books considered here aligns itself with this minimalist, Kantian project. All aspire to a more robust form of naturalism. All make substantial reference to the history of ideas, drawing on pre-modern theories of human nature to buttress their arguments. None, I believe, faces up squarely to the challenge posed with such brilliance in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, namely that the context of ideas which made naturalism a plausible view has been irretrievably shattered. But all, none the less, are at pains to distance themselves from a full-blown Aristotelean naturalism, according to which the best life for human beings can be read off from an empirically discoverable set of characteristics in the same way as the best life for elephants or seals.

J. Budziszewski, for instance, in *The Resurrection of Nature: Political theory and the human character*, draws a distinction between human nature as that which is innate in human beings (ie, does not have to be learned); human nature as that which is common to human



"Roger and Sophie", 1981, one of Alex Katz's huge oil paintings, is reproduced from Alex Katz by Ann Beattie (92pp, with 26 colour illustrations. New York: Abrams. \$27.50. 08109 1212 0). The book is the result of an Abrams editor's desire to find out what would happen "if a writer were asked to examine the work of a painter of like imagination without the constraints of art historical reference or criticism". Beattie, chronicler of post-1960s alienation, has provided an extended fictional essay on the works illustrated.

beings across cultural boundaries; and human nature as the full and appropriate development of human capacities. He believes that the first category includes rather little, and he sees that there is an important gap between the first two together and the third: observing what is biologically given and what is culturally universal does not settle the question how human beings ought to flourish. He thinks, none the less, that the latter question can be answered in naturalistic fashion, through "mature self-reflection", which includes reflection on the contents of categories one and two. His own answer is that "the good of the soul is found in the rational activity by which we understand ourselves and order our lives according to purposes".

At first sight this appears to be an unhelpfully thin (not to say vague) account of human flourishing. According to Budziszewski, the good life must have a certain unity to it, which comes from self-understanding and the consistent pursuit of the purposes thereby disclosed, but the character of the purposes themselves remains an open issue. Might a consistent and reflective person then be thought of as living (a version of) the good life? Budziszewski would almost certainly wish to resist such an implication; and this comes out in his discussion of the virtues as qualities that are needed to sustain human flourishing. Included here are social virtues such as honesty and loyalty, and the thought is that self-understanding and consistency of purpose require a social context in which purposes can be formed and expressed. This, however, is only true in a rather weak sense. Clearly we must take on board language and perhaps other social institutions

if we are to engage in rational thought and behaviour; but having equipped ourselves in this way, it is perfectly conceivable to opt for a life of complete self-indulgence, free-riding on the institutions that have formed us. Someone who chooses to do this must obviously forgo certain ends – such as friendship – but that is only an objection if we assume that self-understanding must invariably reveal these as among our basic goals.

There is a hidden agenda to Budziszewski's book. Billed as a defence of naturalism, its fundamental commitments are in fact religious. Divine revelation provides the ultimate standard against which empirical human nature is judged. The author claims that he wants to chart the road down which "secular and Christian naturalists can travel together", but in my view the secular naturalists are riding piggy-back on their companions from an early stage.

Budziszewski's book has some interesting passages, but it is over-ambitious. Stephen D. Hudson sets himself more modest targets in his book, *Human Character and Morality: Reflections from the history of ideas*, is the better for it. Rather than attempting to advance a substantive conception of human nature, he looks at the relation between that nature and our notion of morality. Indeed, his central point is that human nature is complex and contradictory, and we should therefore expect the institution of morality to display a corresponding complexity. In particular, we should reject what he calls the "direct view" according to which the aim of moral theory should be to select principles that give a complete and consistent set of practical directives, so that in any situation there will unambiguously be one morally right action to perform. Against this, Hudson argues that morality has to do with character as well as with action; and that a moral theory may be adequate if it gives practical guidance but not a definitive resolution of all moral conflicts.

Hume features prominently in Hudson's book as an exponent of this alternative, "indirect" view, and it is welcome to see him presented not merely as a proponent of the distinction between "is" and "ought" statements (as in Budziszewski's book), but as a thinker whose main concern was to relate moral judgments to other aspects of human psychology. A Humean form of naturalism locates the connection between the facts of human nature and moral beliefs in the psychological capacities and limits of human beings. Devices such as Rawls's original position, which attempt to derive moral principles from axioms of rationality, are pointless if the outcome is a set of principles which it is psychologically impossible for people to follow in practice. Hume's method is to start with natural sentiments and to see how far it is possible to move towards the position of an impartial spectator standing outside spatial and temporal relationships. Naturalism of this kind will tend to be conservative, in the sense that it begins with existing beliefs and attitudes from which only limited departures can be contemplated – a corollary that Hudson seems happy to accept.

Christopher J. Berry's *Human Nature* has a rather different aim, namely to show that ideas of human nature play an indispensable role in political theory. He has little difficulty in showing how different interpretations of the human essence correspond to different conceptions of justice, freedom and so forth. But he gets into much deeper water when trying to explain just what argumentative role these interpretations play. He maintains on the one hand that a view of human nature rests on empirically discoverable facts; on the other that the purposes of the theorist will determine which facts are "relevant". But if political theorists can pick and choose in this way, highlighting those aspects of (empirically given) human nature that support their case and ignoring others, it is no longer clear that "human nature" is playing a foundational role. Instead, value-commitments are being made first, and accounts of human nature manufactured to order. If that is so, the omnipresence of theories of human nature would no longer be such an interesting discovery.

Berry's problems are compounded because he thinks of naturalism not as one option among several, but as a compulsory element in political thought. In one chapter he considers

the challenges to this position mounted by Sartre and Rorty. His reply is that the challenges themselves cannot be formulated without saying something about human beings (eg, "man is essentially free"). This is undoubtedly true, but it overlooks the distinction drawn above between uncontroversial, rudimentary human nature, and the much fuller picture of human capacities and motivations that naturalist positions require. The rudimentary elements may provide a sufficient basis from which to mount a critique of naturalism.

*Human Nature* is intended primarily as a textbook, and it contains useful surveys of conceptions of human nature in political thought. It is less convincing when it tries to tackle epistemological issues posed by the idea of human nature. In all three books, excursions into the history of ideas are to some extent enjoyed at the expense of sustained argument on the central topic itself. We may surmise that their authors finally lack confidence in their ability to sustain a naturalist position, and take refuge in the arguments of illustrious predecessors who, if MacIntyre is right, were operating in a more congenial intellectual environment.

What should we conclude about the idea of human nature? It is best seen as an empirical concept whose argumentative function is to set limits to normative claims, rather than to justify them directly. It comprises two elements: first, what I have called rudimentary human nature; second, the whole spectrum of human personality as revealed by anthropology and comparative sociology. In this second dimension, it is human nature to be a Homeric warrior and to be an Indian holy beggar and to be a New England capitalist. But equally it is not human nature to be all of these at once, and this primarily, is where the practical implications of the concept are to be found. A moral theory is deficient if it presupposes capacities in human beings which are nowhere to be found, or which are never found together in combination. Likewise, a political theory is defective if the institutions it prescribes require people to behave in ways which, empirically, they never do, or (this is the more likely case) if it imposes incompatible requirements – to behave in some respects like a Homeric warrior and in others like a New England capitalist. A plausible moral or political theory, respecting these limits, is likely to embody an ideal of human personality, chosen from the available range, but it is duplicitous for the theory's proponents to present this as human nature tout court.

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## Connecting principles

John Robertson

RICHARD F. TEICHGRAEBER III  
"Free Trade" and Moral Philosophy:  
Rethinking the sources of Adam Smith's  
"Wealth of Nations"  
212pp. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. £35.  
08223 0526 7

In this ambitious book, Richard Teichgraber seeks to recover the intellectual sources of the *Wealth of Nations*, and thereby contribute to a better understanding of the intellectual origins of capitalism than Marx, Weber or a range of twentieth-century historians have been able to attain. "Free Trade" and Moral Philosophy is, as the author repeatedly acknowledges, selective in its focus, but Teichgraber is keen to break new ground, and to make the subject accessible to the general reader as well as to the specialist (though the price of the book alone must make that second hope forlorn).

He approaches the work of Adam Smith through substantial chapters on his Scottish contemporaries and mentors, Francis Hutcheson and David Hume, these together forming "arguably the three most important thinkers within the Scottish Enlightenment". To reconstruct the overall architecture of their thought, Teichgraber relates them to two pre-existing intellectual traditions. One is the new conception of moral philosophy pioneered by Shaftesbury at the turn of the seventeenth century. Taking the sentiments rather than reason to be the source of moral values, Shaftesbury had sought to retrieve the concept of virtue from the strictures of Hobbes. The other tradition is that of Natural Law Jurisprudence, renewed by Grotius earlier in the seventeenth century. Here the crucial innovations were the distinction of perfect from imperfect rights, relegating ordinary moral duties to the second category, the identification of the paradigmatic perfect right as exclusive property, the narrowing of government's primary purpose to the protection of such property, and hence the re-orientation of the theory of justice around commercial activity rather than politics. It is when traced to these sources, Teichgraber argues, that the thought of Smith and his Scottish mentors can best be understood, and the differences between them thrown into most revealing relief.

The book is interesting and challenging in a number of ways. Two stand out. In the first

place, Teichgraber offers a reassessment of the relative importance for Smith of Hutcheson and of Hume, arguing that both in moral philosophy and in jurisprudence Smith was in significant respects closer to Hutcheson. Like Hutcheson, he continued to believe that moral philosophy should concern itself with virtue, a quality towards which Hume was notoriously cool. Indeed, Teichgraber argues, this commitment to virtue was such that we should still recognize the existence of an "Adam Smith Problem" in the relation between Smith's two major works, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the *Wealth of Nations*. There is a – possibly deliberate – gulf between the enthusiasm for virtue shown in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the refusal in the *Wealth of Nations* to value commercial activity in moral terms. As with virtue, so with rights: in his jurisprudence Smith continued to use a concept prominent in Hutcheson but virtually discarded by Hume. Acknowledging but sidestepping Hume's technical criticisms of Hutcheson's usage of the concept, Smith went on to outline a programme of legal reform unimagined by Hume.

Teichgraber's second challenging conclusion concerns the contribution of the *Wealth of Nations* to the argument for laissez-faire in the economy. Not only was Smith unoriginal in his commitment to free trade, having been anticipated by Hume and by seventeenth-century English economic writers, but his purpose, Teichgraber argues, was less to make the case for free trade than to make plain the radicalism of that doctrine, and the dangers of its imposition on an uncomprehending people. Confessing that complete free trade was a "utopia", Smith put all his historical realism and political pragmatism at the service of a demonstration that measures to introduce free trade must ever be partial and piecemeal.

Teichgraber offers much to debate, but there are problems in the approach he has chosen, and in the construction of his arguments. One turns out to be less serious than might be expected: the danger of anachronism in identifying the *Wealth of Nations* with the intellectual history of capitalism is largely circumvented by understanding "capitalism" in terms of the eighteenth-century idea of "commercial society". More dangerous is Teichgraber's acknowledged selectivity of focus. Excluding the social context in order to concentrate on the intellectual story may be justified (although the reason given, that Scotland did not change significantly before the 1790s, is distinctly odd), but the intellectual story itself

is distorted by selectivity both in the use of secondary authorities and in the choice of primary subjects. Selective invocation of other scholars allows the author to assume a naturalistic rather than a sceptical reading of Hume's moral philosophy, and, to a lesser extent, to set aside the potential contribution of the classical republican tradition to the Scots' political thought. As for the primary subjects, the inclusion in the story of Adam Ferguson, certainly no less a thinker than Hutcheson, would have put Smith's enthusiasm for virtue into perspective. If Smith was prepared to show warmth in the cause of virtue, the temperature of his commitment, even in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, still fell short of that demanded by Ferguson, who seems to have found Smith almost as cool as Hume.

Finally, there is a problem in the book's construction. Repeatedly, Teichgraber insists that moral philosophy provided the "connecting principles" of all three Scots' thought – only to contend that the doctrine of free trade developed out of the separation of ethics from jurisprudence, as the scope of the latter was restricted to perfect rights. The two strands of Teichgraber's argument point to a real puzzle. Smith was a moral philosopher, and he indicated more than once that he saw his various works, published and projected, as a connected whole. Yet he also wrote the *Wealth of Nations* as a virtually self-standing exposition of economic principles and their application. Teichgraber, however, assumes at the outset that moral philosophy provides the key to the intellectual origins of the *Wealth of Nations* itself, and hence he is obliged to maintain that the two strands of his argument form one coherent thread. The puzzle, which several of his arguments illuminate, cannot be directly explored, to the potential confusion of readers.

David Hume and the Eighteenth Century British Thought: An annotated catalogue has recently appeared as the centennial publication of Chuo University (560pp. Chuo University Library, 742-1 Higashinakano, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo 192-03, Japan). Prepared by Sadao Ikeda, the catalogue gives a detailed description of books and letters acquired in 1982 from the private library of Dr John Valdimir Price. The first part consists chiefly of works by Hume, published in his lifetime. The second contains fifteen letters from Hume, and the third 235 books mainly by eighteenth-century British writers.

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# Sleeping with the supervisor

Helen King

**BERNARD SERGENT**  
*Homosexuality in Greek Myth*  
 Translated by Arthur Goldhammer  
 344pp. Athlone Press, £32.  
 0485113198  
*L'homosexualité initiatique dans l'Europe  
 ancienne*  
 297pp. Paris: Payot, 160fr.  
 2228141305

Georges Dumézil's preface to *Homosexuality in Greek Myth* places Bernard Sergent's work in the historical process by which the denial that the glorious Greeks could possibly be involved in anything as sordid as homosexuality has gradually become the affirmation that homosexuality and heterosexuality are both valid forms of sexual expression, and are not always mutually exclusive. He praises Sergent for giving "not only the raw data but also brilliant applications of interpretive methods". It is true that there is a vast amount of data in both volumes. While the first concentrates on Greek myth, the second expands the argument into other types of source material and other parts of Europe. The methods, however, are open to question.

Despite the apparently more general title of the translated volume, both books deal almost

exclusively with homosexuality in an initiatory context, in which a mature man (*erastes*) of high rank abducts a young boy (*eromenos*) of similar rank and acts as his master, teacher and lover. Although Sergent also mentions female homosexuality, and those individuals who continued to form homosexual relationships beyond the normal ages, his main interest is thus in homosexuality as a deliberate rejection of women in the course of making the boy into a real man. He distinguishes his approach from that of many other writers in that he does not regard ancient Greek homosexuality as tied to the institution of the city-state, but rather as a practice going back to the most distant Greek past; indeed, as he hints in the first book and develops in the second, he wants to trace it back still further, to early Indo-European culture.

Although myth, seen here as preserving the memory of past institutions rather than in terms of what it meant to those who continued to tell it, is the major source for the first book, even there Sergent uses two main "historical" cases to support his argument: the first Cretan, the second Germanic. At the end of the initiatory relationship, sometimes marked by the sacrifice of an animal or a successful hunt, the *eromenos* is given presents, and is recognized as having become a mature man. In the Cretan case the gifts are a cup, a military costume and

an ox. In the first book Sergent, following Dumézil's tripartite model for early Indo-European classification, sees represented here the "three functions": politics, war and economics. Politics covers kingship and religion; the cup is used to pour libations to the gods, hence its assignment to this function. The ox is a major element in ancient agriculture and so comes under economics, although one could argue that, as it is sacrificed by the *eromenos* to Zeus, it could also go under politics/kingship/religion. But in that case the tripartite model would presumably not work. In the second book Sergent has noticed the difficulty, and he moves the ox from economics to politics; he then reverses neatly out of the corner by moving the cup as well, from politics to economics, because it is used to drink from at the banquet after the sacrifice.

The relationship between model and data is stretched further when Sergent turns to the three aspects mentioned in the story of how a Cretan *erastes* chooses an *eromenos*. He tells us that "orderly behaviour" corresponds to politics, "manly courage" to war and "good looks" to economics. Here alarm bells begin to ring. The argument followed for "good looks" is, I think, that economics/production/agriculture includes sumptuary laws for controlling luxury, and that physical attraction comes close to luxury. Trifunctionality, like structuralist binary models or Freudian sexual symbolism, can easily be taken to excess.

There are other problems of method; for example, Sergent's use of anthropological comparisons outside the Indo-European context. This is often superficial, as his casual "Here are a few ethnographic comparisons,

chosen at random from my reading" makes only too clear. Although the examples succeed in making "vivid and vital" a picture of the ancient world in which the nature of the evidence leaves inevitable gaps, the richness and particularity of the other societies cited is lost. Later Sergent writes, "we cannot say that similar phenomena are identical when the social norms in terms of which they are defined are different" - a maxim which should have been applied far more carefully. Similar criticism could be made of his modern analogies. For example, he makes much of a comparison between the invitation to the *erastes* to dine with the *eromenos* at the end of the initiation process, and inviting one's PhD supervisor to dinner after the viva; is it significant, he wonders, that the latter process is particularly prevalent in Germanic countries? Well, of course a meal can mark an important event; but one doesn't necessarily sleep with one's supervisor, even in "Germanic countries", whatever Sergent says about the closeness between the educational process and sex.

Both volumes are well produced. The translation of *Homosexuality in Greek Myth* is sometimes a little too close to the original French, and can read heavily. In these omissions-conscious days I was surprised to see that "French leather" has not been corrected for English-speaking readers. A little more care could also have been taken to ensure that all puns were intentional, although I much enjoyed the suggestion that the festival commemorating Hyakinthos, beloved of Apollo, "was divided into two parts, the first sad, the second gay" (French, "la première triste, la seconde gaie").

## That which comes between

A. W. Price

**ANNE CARSON**  
*Eros the Bittersweet: An essay*  
 189pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.  
 £15.40.  
 0691066817

"Love that time was not as love is nowadays", writes Malory of Lancelot and Guinevere. Anne Carson describes love as it evolved during the early days of Greek lyric poetry in a way partly strange, partly familiar. She suggests (citing Bruno Snell) that falling in love makes one peculiarly aware of the barriers of the self; and (following Eric Havelock) that the experience was intensified by the invention of literacy. For reading, unlike listening, involves a focusing of attention, a blanking out of one's environment and such self-control also alerts one to the boundary between interior self and external world. Falling in love, so often spoken of then in terms of melting, becomes a threat to a newly won individuality: "The lover learns as he loses it to value the bounded entity of himself."

Writing emphasizes separation - between word and word, between writer and reader, between reader and environment. Carson relates this thought more precisely to the novelties of the Greek alphabet. The Greeks invented consonants, which mark the edges of sound. Love and writing then reflected one another: "As eros insists upon the edges of human beings and of the spaces between them, the written consonant imposes edge on the sounds of human speech." This, she argues, gave to antique love a special quality that we faded literates can only guess at.

Such is a central thesis of Carson's densely reflective book. To the reader caught up in its artificially scintillating prose, subdivided into artfully titled sections, it may seem crude to ask: is this credible? One may be untortured by the paradox that love seems both to create and to abolish the self (for erotic reality may be inherently paradoxical). More troubling, amid the niceties of the argument, is a loss of common sense. Consider the following:

For the inhabitants of an oral society love much more intimately blended with their surroundings than we do. Space and the distance between things are not of first importance; these are aspects emphasized by the visual sense. What is vital, in a world of sound, is to

maintain continuity.

Did the Greeks use their eyes only for reading? Also troubling is the ambiguity of the evidence: consonants may mark divisions between syllables, but they also unite with vowels within syllables. To a selective hyper-perceptivity all conclusions are permitted.

The argument is advanced by readings of Archilochus, Sappho, Sophocles and Plato that are always intelligent, but often eccentric. Where Richard Jenkyns, wholly persuasively, elicits out of a single prefix in a poem of Sappho's that we are to see "the man straining closer to the girl to catch each intimate remark", Carson dissolves the man into a psychological abstraction: he is "a cognitive and intentional necessity", symbolizing that "where eros is lack, its activation calls for three structural components - lover, beloved and that which comes between them". Where Kenneth Dover (like the common reader) takes Alcibiades to be placing his own coat above Socrates' old cloak "as a top blanket" before joining him as it were between the sheets, Carson has Alcibiades wrap Socrates up in his own coat before "embracing the bundled-up object of his desire", rather like Tristan laying a naked sword between himself and Isolde (bliss her comparison). Perhaps we are meant to understand Carson as playing variations, not offering interpretations. Indeed, that would seem the only inference to draw from her habit of treating fragments of verse as if they formed whole poems.

In all, it is hard to take Carson's conclusions, or her evidence, very seriously. John Winkler may be more just than he intends in calling her book a "poem of the intellect". As an exercise in ingenuity and sensitivity (also some obscurity), it may be savoured according to taste. Her marshalling of pertinent quotations from the early Greek lyric poets is a welcome reminder of a fragmentary profusion. Her observations about metre, though slightly overstated, display a keenly imaginative ear. Every reader will make his own note of felicitous observations nicely put. To my own taste, her fondness for a small range of metaphors out of geometry, optics and electricity becomes repellent, the effect at once woozy and frigid; but in belles-lettres and jeux d'esprit (though not in real poetry) judgment is a matter of taste, and some will find that Carson's verbal cleverness revivifies for them the pleasures of literacy.

## The peasant's-eye view

Juliet du Boulay

**JAMES C. DAVIS**  
*Rise from Want: A peasant family in the Machine Age*  
 165pp. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, £16.95.  
 0812280342

James C. Davis, married to a first generation émigré from the Slovene-speaking village of Vidovlje in what is now Italy, above Trieste on the Karst plateau, has a particular interest in seeing history from a peasant's-eye view. In *Rise from Want* he studies the momentous changes occurring in the Balkans, from serfdom through famine and deprivation and two world wars to modern industrial prosperity, exclusively in terms of their impact on a succession of his wife's patrilineal ancestors - the Žužek family.

Starting with the Žužeks' putative origins in the sixteenth century when the family were serfs of the Counts of Duino, the story takes shape with the birth of Tomaž in 1774. The description of the first hundred years in the fortunes of the family, until the family's oral tradition can be tapped from the mid-1850s on, is reconstructed from records such as charters, church registers, wills, travel diaries, police and tax records, while the life histories throughout are set in the overall historical and political context. Even during this earlier period the Žužeks are beginning their "rise from want", keeping sheep and tilling their few poor acres, while, in succession, decrees ending first serfdom and then hereditary subjection come into force, culminating with the peasants' acquisition, in 1861, of title to the land. From the mid-1850s, with the building of the railway and the resurgence of work in the quarries, through small improvements in nutrition, living conditions and hygiene, and then the advent of medicine, formal education and



A Sorbian (or Wend) child in local costume from the Lusatia region of East Germany. The photograph is reproduced from DDR (327 colour illustrations with accompanying explanatory text in German, Russian, English and French, Leipzig: P. A. Brockhaus, 3 325 00018 5).

literacy, the effects of industrialization on peasant life are portrayed convincingly as a long process which over several generations steadily influenced the Žužeks' way of life, long before the great industrial boom of the 1950s brought with it radical social and economic change.

The author has intended this book not just for scholars but also for those who have "somewhere among their ancestors, a poor peasant or two", and because of this the book takes the form of a tale simply - even simplistically - told, with discussion and argument kept to a minimum, and all information not directly related to the main theme relegated to notes. This format allows for much human detail: there is the Žužek who, overheard foretelling his own death from the hooting of an owl, was indeed found dead of a heart attack a few days later; and the Žužek whose first love was murdered by the girl's jilted fiancé, and who irritated his two subsequent wives by remember-

ing her every night in his prayers. And in the contrast between the latest Žužek family to be recorded (five children, of whom four reached maturity and are still alive, and the parents recently dead at the ages of eighty and ninety) with the first (eleven children of whom only three survived childhood, with the wife dying at thirty-six and the husband at fifty-six), the statistics are indeed, as the author claims, clothed in flesh and blood.

But the story, although clearly told, lacks information on the values and beliefs of Karst village society as a whole, so that the Žužeks are presented as if they responded in isolation to their economic and political environment, and their motivations tend to be discussed in terms of individual inclination rather than in the context of an ordered pattern of customary social norms. More crucially, this lack of reference to village culture leads to the absence of any serious consideration of those features in village life which are to do with morality and

symbolism, art and religion. No real idea is given of the existence of networks of kinship and friendship sustaining the individual families, and the question at least arises whether singing, dancing or music, embroidery, carving or metalwork, celebration of marriages, harvest times, and saints' days, were not important features of these peasants' lives: from Franc Žužek, for instance, the author's father-in-law, Davis records, though he does not follow up, the opinion that the "misery" of the old days nevertheless carried with it a certain quality of social and religious life which the old man considered ill-lost.

The author is at pains to do justice to the Žužeks and with them the "many millions of poor families" he feels them to represent; so it is ironic that his exclusive concern with the purely economic and political, and his unquestioning acceptance of the values of the modern world - of literacy, of factory-made clothes, of the absence of manure - lead him to a Hobbesian picture of traditional peasant life in which only the hardship is evident: the peasants are prey to "insularity", their piety is "unreflective", their acceptance of hard work "oxlike", and their lack of transport causes them to walk everywhere "like ants". Thus what Davis intends as an apology for the peasants who "saved no souls, and penned no poems, but who helped to make life possible for those who did", amounts in fact to an unwitting evaluation, ignoring the spiritual values which are almost universally strongest among pre-industrial rural people, and the poetry and song which, created by the oral tradition, have provided the models for literate endeavour.

This flaw is I believe an important one, in that it reinforces conceptually the already accomplished disinclination of peasants from their past. Nevertheless this book, if it is taken as representing one side of a more complex picture, throws a sympathetic light on the passage through time of one peasant family, and adds a historical dimension usually missing in more anthropological studies.

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# Remainders

## Eric Korn

I don't know where you are spending the last week in July, but I'm prepared to bet that a commanding majority of you haven't given to the Gilroy Garlic Festival the sober consideration that its merits merit. "Garlic!" I hear you exclaim, or more precisely "Garlic!" - wringing your pretty noses in disgust. "Fugh!"

*The readers over my shoulder:* Hold it right there. Why do you assume that your women readers are so finicking?

*Me:* Why do you assume that only my female readers have pretty noses? Is it fair to arrogate to the exclusive use of your own gender certain adjectives like pretty, shrill, winsome, fluffy or hysterical?

*She:* Is it fair, is it just, is it *manly* to invent me simply to score points off me? Could you win an argument if you didn't write both sides?

*Me (shocked almost into silence):* I never told you to say that!

Gilroy events include the Garlic Queen Pageant (uneasy lies the head that wears that crown), the Tour de Garlic, the 10K Garlic Gallop, Garlic Grove, the Garlic Squeeze Barn Dance and the Great Garlic Cookoff. Be there. I'm hoping to go as part of the Press.

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My innocently chauvinistic praise of Violet Vane, Bard of Brecknock Road, Archpoet of Archway, Tennyson of Tufnell Park, Goethe of Gospel Oak, Horace or at least Hemans of Holloway, voluminous versifier of NWS has not, so far, undammed a torrent of rivals from the gloomy hills of London: Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Camden and Putney, Highgate, Primrose - though why Eliot thought of Primrose Hill as gloomy is hard to imagine, I suppose he wasn't much of a man for kites and zoos. The mountains have laboured and have brought forth a ridiculous Muswell. J.W.M. Draper's *Muswell Rhymes* were spotted on a bookshelf in a bookshop, apparently untouched since 1948. The keen-eyed and estimable finder thinks there is something odd, if not downright sinister, about this: would that it were so!

Draper takes a mighty conspectus of history, from Neolithic ("Such were the men, so says the book / Who chipped the flinty stone, / Who settled by the Hackney Brook, / Where now stands Newington") to February 13, 1896 ("The foul and bloody murder of / The harmless Mr Smith / Provides a date exact enough / To date an epoch with").

I learnt a deal from Draper, and have gained a new respect for what I used to think of as nothing more than the foothills of Mount Ally Pally. Did you know it was home to Cecil Rhodes's sister and Rowland Hill's assistant? That the Mudies' home later became, aptly enough, the Public Library? That Tegemeier had beehives there?

Charles Darwin mentions in a note in *The Origin of Species*

The name of Tegemeier, who wrote Of pheasants in the field, and bees, And dwelt where now the arch-borne train Speeds high above St James's Lane.

Highgate Hill had Betjeman, Golders Green Abse; who now sings of Tottenham Hale and Stamford Hill, of Dartmouth Park and Haringey, a name (it must mean Herring Island) from which familiarity has not taken its Scandinavian mystery. Lovely is the Lea, or rather the London Residuary Body (Department of Environmental Enhancement) Lea Valley Linear Riparian Recreational Facility.

\*\*\*

Ran into a severe case of Brit-USan incomprehension the other day: what you might call linguistic dyspareunia but probably shouldn't. Happened at a mainly-for-truckers stop on Interstate (he died interstate, I should like to have it said of me) 95 in Pa. I was sitting there reading the small ads in *Movin' Out*: "45ft SB-1 Thermo-K. 161", 290, 10spd. Both 80% rubber. Will split. Super Sharp". I was already pondering semantic divergences ("Female College student desires driving position. Certifiable") and wondering if what I really needed was a pair of Politechnics ("Protector" Sap gloves ("Incredible power: Inconspicuous, Guaranteed"). And wondering whether to take the Behaviour Prediction Test ("In less than an hour discover an applicant's attitudes and tendency toward safety, drug abuse, violence and dishonesty"). I read the comforting words of Chaplain Jack and Chaplain Glenn, muscular Christians both: the Reverend Jack's office hours start at 4am at the little chapel at All-American Truck Plaza, PA; not a place, I dare say, where incense burns invisible and dim and pustular acolytes clutch placulative pence. Talking of pence, there must be an awful lot of nickels weighing down the pockets of James Chirk (not his real alias), coinbox raider, for Ohio Bell to want him so badly: they will pay \$15,000 for him.

While all this was going on - not much really - the waitress moseyed up. . . she more sort of sashayed . . . offered me the menu, full of trucker food ("toss salad and hard roll with fired eggs"). But I wanted to know about the special, which was a Pair of Whimpies on a Hard Bun. "Like a Sloppy Joe only sloppier," she explained, without a pause for thought. "And a Sloppy Joe is . . ."

"Where is this guy from?" she demanded, not rhetorically. The food was only passable, but the restaurant used a better scriptwriter (not at all what matron used to make). "They tell me," she offered with an envious detachment, "they tell me it's relatively fresh."

\*\*\*

Have you done your believing six impossible things before breakfast yet today? I have, but then I breakfast late.

I  
Chomskys (Chomskys, Chomskys, compare and contrast Trotskyite / Trotskyist, Sodomite / Sodomist) make great play with the notion of novelty. "Here", they say, with the winsome mock modesty of an Edwardian child in a sailor suit with a spade and a bucket full of samplings (of a species now extinguished in consequence of overpopulation by Edwardian boys in sailor suits), "I bet no one has made anything just like this in the whole history of the world." This little lad (Language Acquisition Device) can utter sentences that have never been spoken before, like this one for example, where n indicates the number of times you have to repeat the phrase "like this one for example" in order to give an impressive demonstration of the concept of embedding, and to insure that it is original, which is why successive editions of textbooks get longer and longer. I am convinced that they gravely underestimate the likelihood of improbable things happening. The *iron-ai* or "no colour" school of Zen, which broke away from the "pure land" sect in the early Meiji era, publishes a magazine on flower-arrangement with a title which could be translated as "colourless green ideas". Similarly, the Chinese phrase book that tells you how to say

"perhaps it is not from the governor-general" in Hong Kong colloquial, along with more everyday sentences like "Kill that Cockroach!" and "I am tired of eating pine-apples" and "Hold this horse a moment. Take it and hang it up."

II

By the same token there must be a degree of stupefaction when US travellers - but not they alone - hear the vacuum cleaner advert: "Nothing sucks like Electrolux": how they must stare at their hotel television screens in wild surmise, cling to each other in amaze, what is it with this British tongue. A word of advice to Vacuum Publicity, Ltd: Don't run it in Omaha. On the other hand, "My Hoover is called Herbert, what's yours called?" would go down a treat.

III

Meanwhile the London Underground breaks the sound barrier with its remorseless self-praise. "There's a song in the air at Ealing East", chirp the posters, and a chubbily drear cartoon character appears whistling in gratitude. "Yes, the new freeze of tiles on the down platform (District) is young local artist Felissa Katzen's interpretation of the Middlesex folksong

In Gunnersbury Park one morning clear I went a ploughing with my dear Crying O the broad furrow Between Angel and Borough

But don't be so ravished by the scenery that you forget the train! (In fact as the new escalators will not be finished until 1994 and there is no access to the platform, we suggest you admire the tiles at the next station which is Ealing Par North West and Didcot.)"

IV

To: Sunstroke Villas Incorporated St Katherine's Dock, E1. Thank you for your letter with its most exciting news! As you guessed, I am very pleased to have won a voucher for half the price of a week's time-share (worth from £1,900 to £6,000) in your new purpose-built fun village Playa Desnuda. I wonder if you will forgive an old pedant for pointing out that "time-sharing" is a misnomer, and impossible under Special Relativity. What you are so generously proposing is that we share the space by occupying it at different times, thereby circumventing Pauli's Exclusion Principle, which says that two particles may not, or at any rate should not, occupy the same space at the same time. Thus, I sup-

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 330  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 12. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date.  
Entries, marked "Author, Author 330" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on June 19.

1 My dear Godson Guy,

I learned from your mother, by pressing her hard, some time ago that it would be a convenience to you and a great help in your career to possess an Association Football - whereupon, in my desire that you should receive the precious object from no hand but mine, I cast about me for the proper place to procure it. But I am living in a tiny, splendid country town, where luxuries are few and football shops unheard of, so I was a long time getting a clue that would set me on the right road.

2 Ay, the ball is flying,

The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

3 Jane takes her seat-rub'd Pale, and now  
She trips to milk the Stand-Red Cow;  
Where for some shiny foot-ball Swain,  
Jane strokes a slobber or twain.

Competition No 336  
Winner: John Fuller

A small Stonehenge, where heavy black swallows  
And bite away, like Time, the tender stone  
Andrew Young, "The Fairy Ring"

2 Their attitudes strange: the human free  
Slowly revolves on its sole. All round  
Downcast looks; and the direct dreamer  
Treads out in trance his lane; unwavering.

Strange decorum: so prodigal of bows,  
Yet lost in thought and self-absorbed, they meet  
Impressively, without acknowledgement.  
A courteous nation, but unsociable.

Field full of folk, in their immunity  
From human ills, crestfallen and serene.  
Who would have thought these shaven heads  
Livedly friends!

Surely these acres are Elysian Fields.  
Donald Davie, "The Mushroom Gatherer"  
(After Mickiewicz).

3 "Oh, I'm not particular as to size,"  
Alice hastily replied  
And broke off a bit of the edge  
with each hand  
and set to work very carefully  
nibbling  
first at one  
and then the other.  
On the Staten Island Ferry  
two men are dorking  
over the price  
of a shipment of Armalites,  
as Henry Thoreau was wont to quibble  
with Ralph Waldo Emerson  
on the price of a pair of shoes.

4 "I am tired of eating pine-apples" and  
"Hold this horse a moment. Take it and hang it up."

# Letters

## Change in the Soviet Union

Sir, - Since Alexander Masovianus's letter (May 15) criticizing what he takes to be my views on change in Communist systems generally and the Soviet Union in particular appeared seven weeks after the review itself, it is a pity that I wrote might be badly misled by Mr Masovianus's inability to comprehend the review and by his remarkable capacity to misread the point.

If readers other than Masovianus had caught that I was citing Husak's Czechoslovakia as a country which enjoyed a "measure of political pluralism, albeit still limited", you would doubtless have received letters of protest long before now. But in making a brief comparison of the different ways in which political change came about in Czechoslovakia and Poland, I referred quite explicitly to the changes which manifested themselves in 1968 in Czechoslovakia and in 1980-81 in Poland. The phrase quoted above refers to these countries at those particular times. For other TLS readers it was evidently unnecessary to spell out that one more clearly than I did, but I had reckoned without Masovianus.

He objects also to my use of the expression, "political change", as one in any way applicable to the events of the past two years in the Soviet Union. I did not, it is worth observing, describe these changes as "radical" or "systemic" and, indeed, went out of my way to say that they should not be mistaken for "the institutionalization of pluralist democracy". But to refuse to recognize anything short of that as "political change" worthy of discussion is indicative of a closed mind. So much has happened in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev which represents a sharp contrast with the Brezhnev years that a letter correcting Masovianus's misrepresentation of my review is hardly the place to elaborate on it. If he is sincere in his plea for more facts and really is interested in a more detailed argument of the case, I would refer him to my articles in the Winter 1986-7 issue of *World Policy Journal* (New York) and the April-June 1987 issue of the *Political Quarterly* (London) as well as to forthcoming symposia on what is happening in the Soviet Union which will appear in the June issues of two rather different American journals, the *Nation* (New York) and *The National Interest* (Washington), in both of which I am among the contributors.

For the time being, it may be enough for Masovianus to know that more serious political argument is taking place now in Soviet newspapers and journals than at any time since the 1920s, that literary works which could not be published even during the best years of Khrushchev's "thaw" are now appearing in large editions, that proposals for economic reform with a significant market element are being published and hotly debated and that the personnel change in the higher echelons of the party and the Council of Ministers has been the most sweeping to occur in the first two years of office of any party leader in Soviet history.

The limits within which criticism may take place have been considerably extended, though some subjects remain firmly taboo. However, in making the latter point (which in no way contradicts anything I said in my review), Masovianus gives two examples and, characteristically, gets one of them wrong. He cites "environmental pollution" as a topic which remains "out of bounds" for criticism in Soviet publications. In reality, even under Brezhnev, attacks on environmental pollution were frequent and it was an issue which critics (writing in officially sanctioned Soviet publications) succeeded in putting on the political agenda. As a result of their efforts, the party leadership (and this has been especially evident of late) acquired a heightened consciousness of the importance of the issue and of the need for conservation measures.

Finally, when Masovianus asks, rhetorically, whether I suppose that dissidents now in emigration "ever had a role in the political life of the Soviet Union (apart, perhaps, from a comparatively minor one, as inmates of labour camps)", and whether the present going-on in the Soviet Union is "any degree with the ideas of the dissidents who remain in place", he, unwittingly, echoes one of my points. In my review I drew attention to the fact that the current changes are not the result of the activity of reformers who remained within the boundaries of the system. I took issue with the image projected by the Western mass media (at least until recently) of a "Soviet political class . . . divided between a handful of dissidents with new ideas and a 'lumpen-intelligentsia' of like-minded automatons". In other words, I was suggesting that if we focus our attention entirely on the overt dissidents within the Soviet Union, who constitute much less than 1 per cent of the population, and ignore the social and political activity of, and the diversity of view to be found among, the remaining 99 per cent and more (including the 19 million party members), we shall fail to understand very much about change and continuity within the Soviet system.

Not all dissidents, however (whether within the Soviet Union or in emigration), have minds as closed as that of Masovianus. The most distinguished of them by far, Academician Andrei Sakharov, while continuing to criticize the treatment of dissidents, has said that positive changes are taking place under the new Soviet leadership and that Gorbachev, in his view, is going at just the right speed in his *perestroika*.

How far Gorbachev wishes to go and how far he will be able to go remain to be seen. Positive though many of the recent trends are, they are by no means necessarily irreversible. But if we are to offer an adequate interpretation of both the policy innovation and the political struggle taking place within the Soviet system today, it is essential to pay attention (as the authors of two of the books I reviewed favourably did) to the greater variety of informed opinion now to be heard within the Soviet Union itself. Students of Soviet politics would be ill-advised to sit back and allow their thinking to be done for them by emigrants who (if we are to believe Mr Masovianus) played little or no role in Soviet political life.

ARCHIE BROWN.  
St Antony's College, Oxford.

## Civil War in Angola

Sir, - As your reviewer Michael Massing says (May 8), anyone expecting to become the wiser on the origins of the Angolan civil war by reading Ryszard Kapuscinski's *Another Day of Life* will be simply left in total confusion. The most serious distortion in Kapuscinski's account is his confusing chronology of events in 1975, concerning which foreign troops were first in Angola. As a number of independent journalists and writers have pointed out, including Fred Bridgland and Colin Legum, it was undoubtedly the Cubans who were there first. It seems clear that Angola was merely a domino in Cuba's African plan to suck out of Africa all possible cash and non-cash benefits for the purpose of propping up Cuba's perpetually faltering economy.

It is vital, today, to understand the origins of the Angolan civil war, in order not to miss any opportunities for peace. Unita's offer to re-open the Benguela Railway is now on the table and being debated by the MPLA, Zaire, Zambia and the front-line States. Peace in Angola is vital to economic development in Southern Africa, and to any coherent approach to dealing with the anticipated tragedy of AIDS in Africa. Kapuscinski's book drives a train through any attempt to gain a useful, objective perspective on the conflict in Angola.

MARCEL PRUWER.  
Schuytstraat 1-7, B-2018 Antwerp.

tingly, echoes one of my points. In my review I drew attention to the fact that the current changes are not the result of the activity of overt dissidents but, rather, of the efforts of reformers who remained within the boundaries of the system. I took issue with the image projected by the Western mass media (at least until recently) of a "Soviet political class . . . divided between a handful of dissidents with new ideas and a 'lumpen-intelligentsia' of like-minded automatons". In other words, I was suggesting that if we focus our attention entirely on the overt dissidents within the Soviet Union, who constitute much less than 1 per cent of the population, and ignore the social and political activity of, and the diversity of view to be found among, the remaining 99 per cent and more (including the 19 million party members), we shall fail to understand very much about change and continuity within the Soviet system.

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## Minority Poets

Sir, - It is indeed difficult to sympathize with Peter Jay's suggestion that white, male, middle-class poets who believe that poetry is an art are commercially unviable (Behind the Lines, May 15). Lorna Sage is too kind when she says that Jay has a point, though he has not located it. I think he has located his point, but that it doesn't bear scrutiny. The idea is that you have to be black, female, working-class and/or artless to achieve commercial credibility - in other words, you have to have a gimmick of an upstart nature.

Congratulations to Lorna Sage for mentioning the *Poets and Writers Against Apartheid* reading at Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, on May 24, in the same column as her quotation from Peter Jay's open letter. The *Poetry Live* pamphlet of 200 Contemporary UK and Irish Poets, which she also mentions, lists thirty-six women. To my knowledge, only one of these is black. Black males do slightly better. I counted three. None of the poets can claim to be working-class, although some are of working-class stock (alas?).

Nothing has changed much. Commercial credibility is still mainly a white, male, middle-class prerogative. To quibble about the crumbs tossed in the direction of a few misfits is to make a point.

SYLVIA KANTARIS.  
14 Osborne Park, Helston, Cornwall.

## Stony Ground

Sir, - In his review of Tony Augarde's *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* (May 8), Anthony Burgess wrongly says that Clapham and Dwyer were banned from the BBC for saying a joke had fallen on stony ground. The joke they were actually banned for was decidedly more offensive to the religious feeling of those days, with its reference to the Maker. They said that the difference between a baby and a bottle of beer was that the baby did not have the maker's name on the bottom.

FABIENNE SMITH.  
55 Manor Place, Edinburgh.

## Writing Culture

A line was omitted from the first paragraph of April Fitz Lyon's review of Alexander Dargomysky's *The Stone Guest* (Commentary, May 8). The sentence should have read: "Cui's *William Ratcliff* hardly fitted the bill; and the great success of Serov's *Judith* (1863) and *Rogneda* (1865) was particularly galling to the Nationalists, who considered Serov a fallen angel, tainted by the West, who had even made the unforgivable journey to Bayreuth."

The making and unmaking of an anthropologist

gical myth, while impugning the scholarship of the individuals (the list is long) who have perversely failed to be convinced.

I am accused of misrepresenting the book's basic claims. This shows my disrespect for facts. But surely, after all the long negative reviews the book has by now accumulated - some written by anthropologists with detailed empirical knowledge of Samoa - it must be clear that what the book demonstrates is a matter of legitimate disagreement. Simply restating its all-too-clear assertions doesn't help. The *argument* of my essay (ignored by Freeman) was simply that "the facts" in complex cultural descriptions like his and Margaret Mead's do not speak for themselves but depend on underlying "allegorical" patterns for their coherent shape and plausibility.

Freeman claims I have misrepresented his relation to sociobiology. Perhaps my sentence about his book's "scientism" being "inspired by recent developments in sociobiology" oversimplifies a position he has elaborated elsewhere. It is perfectly clear from Margaret Mead and Samoa that there is a significant debt. But I am prepared to accept that Freeman's "scientism" - amply demonstrated by his letter's simplistic appeal to "the facts" - has other sources.

For the record, it is the sustained contention of *Writing Culture* that cultural interpretation is always historically, politically and rhetorically accountable. This is what Professor Freeman dismisses as "obscurantism".

JAMES CLIFFORD.  
History of Consciousness Program, University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California 95064.

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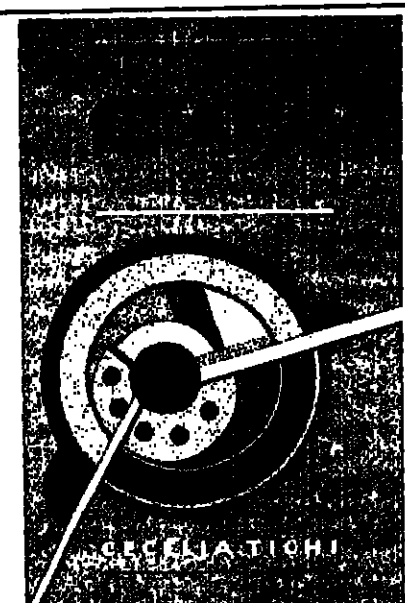
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## COMMENTARY

## Laurel love-object

Arthur Jacobs

RICHARD STRAUSS  
Daphne  
Grand Theatre, Leeds

Older theatre-goers may recall Edith Evans turning into a tree in James Bridie's *Daphne Laureola*, but Richard Strauss's operatic version of the myth has until now remained unstaged in this country. Even the composer's dedicated adherents have generally been reserved in their praises of the score, though Pauline Strauss is said to have declared it her favourite among her husband's operas. A certain obloquy has fallen on the libretto of Joseph Gregor, whom Strauss accepted as collaborator when political pressures in Nazi Germany broke his partnership with the Jewish Stefan Zweig.

In one long act, *Daphne* was originally intended to take its place in a double bill with *Friedenstag* (for which, also, Gregor had written the libretto) and indeed had its Dresden premiere in that form in 1938. But it has more often been allowed to stand on its own, as in the new production by Opera North – which, despite some unnecessary mystification on stage, ranks high in the achievement of the company and its musical director, David Lloyd-Jones.

A hint has been dropped that Opera North finds in Strauss a partial substitute for those larger-scale Wagner works which are financial-

ly outside its grasp. If you cannot have Erda, then have her Greek likeness in Gaia, the Earth Mother, similarly given to slow, low-toned contralto utterance. But the drama in *Daphne* is without Wagnerian cosmic pretensions; and unlike such a later work as Henze's *The Bassarids*, it invests classical myth with no modern psychological insights. The case is specific and once-upon-a-time. The adolescent Daphne rejects her shepherd suitor, Leukippos, and is swept off her feet by the disguised Apollo. The god slays Leukippos but then repents his own intrusion and metamorphoses his love-object into the laurel.

At first the music promises only the golden-glowing "autumnal" style with which Strauss lulls us too easily in such works as the *Four Last Songs*. We recognize, inevitably, echoes of the earlier and more vigorous operas. An orchestral motive of downward-striding fourths, representing the god's power, recalls the similar strides by which John the Baptist, in *Salome*, proclaims the power of his Master. But suddenly, and by the purely musical means of an unprecedented chord of Schoenberg-like complexity, the tension between Apollo and Daphne is made manifest. From then, the large-scale operatic structure is fully articulated and the piece goes convincingly to its goal.

That moment of tension is exactly seized in a gesture of meeting hands – a fine stroke on the part of the director Philip Prowse. But he betrays that truthfulness to the text by a conjuring trick: Apollo is not Apollo but, casting off his dark cloak, appears finally as a twentieth-century

figure, cigarette-case-tapping cynic in what used to be called "immaculate evening dress" (Prowse, as usual, is his own designer.) Fortunately the closing scene of the opera, in which the young woman has become the branching tree and the melody she sings has divested itself of words, is staged in straightforward pictorial fashion and as beautifully as practicalities permit.

The ardent tone and virginal air required for Daphne's role are found by Helen Field in her marvellous touching Gretchen in the English National Opera's *Faust*. But she does not always get beyond the up-and-down wavy phrase to convey the longer span of Strauss's line. The two tenor roles of Apollo and Leukippos, both strongly characterized in music, have been most fortunately cast in William Lewis and Peter Jeffes. As Prometheus, Gaea (Daphne's parents) Sean Rea sings lowly, but Patricia Payne apparently found the lowest notes a cruel task.

Yet it is perhaps the orchestra of Opera North which most surprises the visiting critic with its excellence – on this as on other occasions. Woodwind and brass were particularly rich and precise, even if the alphas which Strauss added to the orchestration was missing (as it was, apparently, at the Dresden premiere). Though the force of strings was only about half what the composer prescribed, the total orchestral result paid tribute equally to the players' skill, Lloyd-Jones's mastery of balance, and the handsome acoustics of the Grand.

bronze of Glenda Jackson's Phedra.

For the student as well as the general visitor there is interest in the varied arrangement of the displays. Some are grouped by donor; others are devoted to single performers: Adeline Genée, Gordon Craig (dominated by William Rothenstein's fine portrait of him as a young Hamlet). There is a reconstructed dressing-room, a toy theatre shop. And the start of what will obviously be taking up the room of the future: performance records of the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company (as well as compelling images from the Old Vic of the war years like Richardson's towering Falstaff). Students of theatre might

perhaps diverge from the general public's wish for less emphasis on memorabilia to make room for other aspects of theatre history. The hope for the future must lie in the regular changeover of exhibitions (with a range of tastes and needs in mind). And, above all, is the provision of adequate facilities for the researchers who have for so long now been off from the materials once available at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It will be something when the research room at the Theatre Museum comes into use, but the real need is for a speedy opening of the base at Olympia, where archival materials will have to be consulted in the future.

## Poetic possessions

Katherine Bucknell

All Roads Lead to France: Edward Thomas  
1879-1917  
Imperial War Museum, until September 6

This tribute to Edward Thomas on the seventieth anniversary of his death, April 9, 1917, in the Battle of Arras, will bring a tear to all but the most unsympathetic eye. Personal possessions, photographs, letters and manuscripts are modestly laid out in a small grey room. Excerpts from Thomas's poems float on the walls, piano music sounds in the air. The simplicity of the display lends it poignancy and seems well calculated to catch the interest of casual visitors to the War Museum who may be unacquainted with Thomas's work.

The exhibition divides Thomas's life in two: first, the family man, nature-lover, and prose writer; second, the poet and soldier. In the larger of two display cases, a table made by Thomas, a favourite chair, books from his library, and a manuscript of *Beautiful Wales* form a tableau of the man at work. Next to it are photographs and family memorabilia including a drawing of the house in Lambeth where Thomas was born, a revealing 1894 report from St Paul's School (familiar from biographical accounts), an early book of "Field Notes", and an 1896 letter from Helen. A walking-stick and Ordnance Survey maps are displayed with first editions of several of Thomas's prose works. These and other items give no hint of the difficulties and sorrow of Thomas's family life, nor do they explain why he chose, as a mature poet, to leave all this for the army.

A second display case, which is perhaps of greater interest to admirers of Thomas's poetry, contains manuscripts of more than half a dozen poems including "Roads" and a first draft of "As the Team's Head-Brass". With these are a 1916 letter from Robert Frost and two letters to six-year-old Myfanwy Thomas, one including Thomas's well-known description of "Out in the Dark", the poem inspired by Myfanwy's night-time fears. The most vividly suggestive item in this group is a first draft of "The Trumpet" written at the Royal Artillery Barracks, Trowbridge, in September 1916. Gunner calculations fill half the sheet and the poem is written underneath in a solid block of long-hand like a letter. Thomas sent the poem to Eleanor Farjeon, explaining: "I have written it with only capitals to mark the lines because people are all around me and I don't want them to know."

In presenting Thomas as a war poet, the exhibition tends to overlook that he wrote only one poem after leaving England. This was of Yeatsian "The Sorrow of Love", the draft of which appears on the last page of a diary he played here with a miniature edition of Shakespeare and other possessions he carried in France. The cover and pages of the diary are badly creased, apparently by the shell that killed Thomas.

Perhaps the most affecting piece in the exhibition is a letter of condolence from D. H. Uzzell, the original of Thomas's "Lullaby". It wrote that Thomas's death "was a blow to me and my family we all liked him and he was as big as if it had been one of our own boys. He was a hero but some body had to be killed for us."

## COMMENTARY

## Chattering behind bars

Michael Hofmann

EUGENE O'NEILL  
The Hairy Ape  
Lyttelton Theatre

Two qualities characterize Peter Stein as a director: a fanatical attention to detail, and a seemingly limitless technical ambition. His production of *The Hairy Ape*, in his own admirably slangy German translation, is as intensive and extensive as anything I have ever seen: it is a staggering accomplishment, a cathedral display of theatrical vision and expertise.

When the curtain first rises, it reveals the proscenium arch entirely taken up with a riveted, grinding, uneasy surface of steel plates. When these eventually part, it is at a point some twenty or thirty feet above the stage, and it is at this unfamiliar and exhilarating height that we see the first scene unfold of Eugene O'Neill's anti-capitalist tragedy of the stoker Yank. There are sixteen stokers, stooped and grimy and stripped to the waist, bawling and drinking and playing music in their iron-fur-

nished cage in the steerage. They drift loosely and dangerously from one point of interest and authority to another, from Long, the socialist agitator – who pathetically stands up on a soapbox, which, in that confined space, means that he has to stand bent double – to Paddy, the old Irishman who has seen clipper ships, to Yank, their backbone and spirit and spokesman who declares himself alive by virtue of the twenty-five miles an hour his labour produces – without asking himself whom it benefits. O'Neill's strenuous stage-directions are carried out to the letter: the uproar "swelling into a sort of unity", the "Neanderthal" appearance of the men, and perhaps most crucially and powerfully, "except for slight differentiation . . . all these men are alike". Their matted hair hangs into faces dominated by high foreheads and prognathous jaws, their limbs resemble grey, oiled tubular steel, they do the ironic choruses (at the concepts of love, justice or God) "of hard, barking laughter" with a will, and even – a clever touch of Stein's – fall in with the conclusions of speeches, showing their utter familiarity with arguments that are as issueless as the cycle of labour in which they are trapped.

For the next scene, one has to crane one's



"Four studies of Miners at the Coalface", 1942, is on show at Marlborough Fine Art, 6 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BY, in the exhibition A Tribute to Henry Moore 1898-1986, until the end of June.

## Savage laughter

H. R. Woudhuysen

SHAKESPEARE  
Thus Andronicus  
Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

In 1579 a middle-aged lawyer called John Stubbs was sentenced to public mutilation at Westminster for having written a "lewd and seditious" pamphlet against Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to the French king's brother. It took the executioner three blows to sever his right hand; but before Stubbs faltered he "put off his hat with his left and said with a loud voice, 'God save the Queen!'" Camden, who witnessed this appalling scene, records that "The multitude standing about was altogether silent, either out of horror of this new and unwonted punishment, or else out of pity towards the man". About ten years later Shakespeare, still in his early twenties, displayed on the stage in *Thus Andronicus* the rape and mutilation of Lavinia, a young woman who has both hands and her tongue cut off: the needless sacrifice by a father, Titus, of his right hand and his reward for its loss with the heads of two of his sons; and the sight of two youths having their throats slit, their blood collected in a dish and used in the making of a pie which their mother and stepfather then eat. An audience which watches the representation of these horrors for its entertainment and also the instruction might be expected to react as the multitude did when Stubbs lost his right hand – with horror and pity, but above all else in a shocked silence, that the tongueless Lavinia should so eloquently propose, and then insist that

horror, pity and silence are not testing enough: the audience is also expected to laugh at what it sees, as Titus does at the height of his suffering when he has no more tears to shed, before he embarks on his career of assumed madness and hideous revenge.

In her Stratford debut as director, Deborah Warner succeeds powerfully in presenting a spectacle in which *Thus* has to be taken on its own terms, as it is – not for what it might once have been, nor for what it could be turned into. On a starkly bare stage, with a minimum of props, with costumes which discreetly manage not to draw attention to themselves and only a few highly effective lighting changes the play moves unerringly between high tragedy and the most painful comedy. The audience is allowed to laugh, but at the right moments, and is made to feel that here laughter need neither be innocent nor happy. The play's pace throughout is disciplined and well controlled with no slackening or falling off in the second half. Instead the production becomes more moving as Titus sinks down and is sucked in to become a deadly part of that Rome which he had earlier observed was "a wilderness of tigers". The audience in the Swan Theatre is clearly implicated in the action by the opening and closing scenes in which the unseen Romans are directly questioned from the stage about the succession of the crown. Nor is there much relief for it elsewhere in the production. With the exception of a large aluminium ladder to which Tamora's defeated sons are tied when they enter Rome and which turns up again when Aaron is to be hanged, and a rather bizarre preparation for the banquet by which a flag servant, it keeps theatrical tricks to a minimum. It deliberately takes refuge in neither a ritualistic, nor a symbolic, nor an

abstract approach, yet its naturalism is kept in check – the really gruesome parts, the murders, the mutilations and the rape are appalling but credible: blood is used sparingly and almost always on spotlessly white linen. Similarly the production avoids turning the play into a noisy piece of rhetorical bluster; not all the speaking of verse is entirely satisfactory but it rarely lapses into stylistic self-consciousness.

The marvellous economy of the production places a great burden on the actors, most of all on Brian Cox's stooping, almost dancing Titus, who moves with great conviction and dignity from a soldierly obliviousness to what anyone says to him, on to a kind of tragic grandeur. Equally Estelle Kohler's fluent and mature performance as Tamora, whose words cover up for her deeds, is well matched against the speechless gestures of Sonia Ritter's Lavinia and the fading power of her husband Saturninus (Jim Hooper). What the production most disappointingly lacks is an Aaron who can convey the theatrical glamour of evil: Peter Polycarpon is too pale to have "A joyless, dismal, black and sorrowful issue" and too decent to enjoy the wickedness he should revel in. Far more convincing in this respect are Tamora's thuggish public-school-educated sons Demetrius and Chiron (Piers Ibbotson and Richard McCabe), who squirm gleefully back on stage with their hands hidden in their sleeves, sickeningly parodying their mutilation of Lavinia after her rape.

This *Thus Andronicus* retains its power to shock (Titus kills Lavinia when she is sitting on his lap, his handless stump on her shoulder, effortlessly twisting her neck and breaking it with an audible snap), by presenting what should not be seen and by reminding the audience of the grim humourousness of the obscene.

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## HARVARD

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# Changing the canon

Brian Lee

DONALD McQUADE, ROBERT ATWAN, MARTHA BANTA, JUSTIN KAPLAN, DAVID MINTER, CECILIA TICHU and HELEN VENDER (Editors)  
The Harper American Literature  
Volume One, 2,430pp. 0 06 044367 7  
Volume Two, 2,902pp. 0 06 044368 5  
Harper and Row. Paperback, £18 each.

"We were the biggest people and we ought to have the biggest conceptions." This familiar American sentiment was expressed in 1876 by one of Henry James's fictional artists, Roderick Hudson, who went on to add that the biggest conceptions would bring forth in time the biggest performances. Time was to prove him right, of course, though in fact there had been some pretty big performances in American literature already, including *Moby-Dick* and the ever-expanding *Leaves of Grass*. During the next hundred years, these would be joined by such leviathans as *An American Tragedy*, *U.S.A.*, *Sands of Lonigan*, *The Cantos*, *Of Time and the River*, *The Recognitions*, *Ancient Evenings*, *Gravities Rainbows*, and, not least, by James's own late, baggy monsters. It is little wonder, then, that this anthology, *The Harper American Literature*, is also a very big performance, containing within its two volumes 5,300 densely packed pages of poetry and prose. Yet, with the exception of Whitman's masterpiece—which is printed in full in the 1855 version, together with selections from the *Deathbed edition*—none of the other texts mentioned here is represented by more than brief excerpts. Alternatively, their creators are sometimes exhibited by work in different forms, such as New Journalism (Mallory), the novella (James), or the short story (Pynchon). Others, like Farrell and Gaddis, are left out altogether. Such distortions and omissions are inevitable in any selection, however large, and the reason for making this point is not in order to find fault with the editors, but rather to indicate the sheer impossibility of the task they set themselves. Indeed, the scholars who worked on this project deserve congratulating on the number of full, representative texts they have contrived to squeeze into the collection. These include *Walden*, *Billy Budd*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Daisy Miller*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Edith Wharton's Summer*, *The Waste Land*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Seize the Day*, *O'Neill's High Tide*, and *David Mamet's The Vermont Sketches*. Moreover, the anthologies of Post-war and Contemporary poetry are themselves well worth the cost of the second volume. Judged purely in terms of size, the collection as a whole is excellent value for money, and will undoubtedly displace its competitors in college classrooms throughout America.

But a production of this kind has a significance reaching beyond its economy and flexibility as a teaching resource. What distinguishes it from its predecessors, according to the General Editor, is a determination "to extend the conventional boundaries of the American literary tradition." What is not made clear in

the preface is that there is an equally deliberate attempt in some areas to restrict those conventional boundaries by excluding certain writers, and thereby minimizing the importance of the schools or movements they represent. In seeking to change the canon of American literature the Harper anthology is likely to have as profound an effect upon literary history and criticism as that produced by the textbooks of the New Critics forty years ago. And it is in terms of such probable consequences that it must ultimately be judged.

It could be argued that this editorial policy reflects changes that have already taken place in the world of American letters, and to some extent this is true. In expanding the temporal dimensions of the subject the editors demonstrate their awareness of a growing dissatisfaction with those accounts of American literature which locate its origins so firmly in the Puritan tradition. As a corrective to this narrow North-eastern bias, they reprint not only a selection of records by early European voyagers and coastal navigators from Columbus to Samuel de Champlain, but also various Native American Creation Myths and stories of first encounters. And, at the other end of the time scale, they provide a very generous amount of space for post-war writing, over a thousand pages being given over to the work of seventy-five authors from Nabokov to Rita Dove. What emerges from these Pre-Colonial and Post-Modernist extensions is not just a new map of literary history, but also, for the careful reader, a different *periphrasis* created by the many new arguments and reorientations involved in the experience of navigating unfamiliar terrain.

The same could also be claimed for the anthology's other distinctive feature, its "pluralistic realism". This phrase, borrowed from Nathan Huggins, is used to describe the range and variety of different voices incorporated in the collection. Works by women, blacks, Asian-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Native-Americans are discussed, presented, and blended with more traditional texts in such a way that they can be heard "as more than simply statistical responses or intellectual concessions to contemporary propriety". And, while the reconstruction of American literary history implied by such a shift is nothing like as radical as that suggested more than ten years ago by Jerome Rothenberg and George Quasha in their innovative anthology, *America A Prophecy*, it does indicate the kind of changes that are taking place in the literary establishment. If there is any evidence of an intellectual concession to contemporary propriety, it is to be found in those sections such as "The Literature of Contemporary America: Prose", where work by women, black and white, is represented far more fully than that of any other minority group. Though an excellent case can be made for the inclusion of each and every one of them (Grace Paley, Toni Morrison, Bobbie Ann Mason, Maxine Hong Kingston, Alice Walker, Ann Beattie, and Leslie Marmon Silko), and is indeed made by David Minter, the editor, one cannot help but regret the omission of such significant talents as that of Ishmael Reed.

A much more worrying omission, however, disfigures what is otherwise an excellent anthology of post-war American poetry. In her introduction to this section, Helen Vender carefully describes and assesses each school of poetry: the Confessionals, the Beats, the New York poets, and the Deep Image poets, before going on to print generous selections from their individual members. But, when she arrives at the Black Mountain group, her generosity fails her, and the entire school is summarily dismissed for deriving "perhaps too closely" from Pound. No one would dispute her right to hold such an opinion, but having expressed it so cursorily in her essay, it would have been charitable of her to have at least given readers

an opportunity to test the judgment by printing something by Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, or Denise Levertov. Her failure to do so smacks not so much of eccentricity, as of a serious departure from the principle of eclecticism that informs the entire anthology. Gertrude Stein, a writer who is accorded her due recognition in this book, maintained that the business of art is to express completely the complete actual present. Black Mountain College and its poets made a significant contribution to just such an expression at a critical moment in America's history. It would be gratifying to think that this might be acknowledged more handsomely in future editions.

## Writing to a formula

Mark Abley

CHRISTINE BOLD  
Selling the Wild West: Popular western fiction, 1869-1960  
215pp. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. \$27.50.  
0 253 35151 0

"A writer", William Wallace Cook once explained, "is a manufacturer. After gathering his raw product, he puts it through the mill of his imagination, retorts from the mass the personal equation, refines it with a sufficient amount of common sense and runs it into bars of bullion, let us say. If the product is good it passes at face value and becomes a medium of exchange." Cook was a manufacturer himself; for thirty-five years he milled and retorted and refined for Street and Smith Ltd, one of America's foremost publishers of dime novels and pulp fiction. He forged Westerns, detective stories, tearjerkers: whatever he was paid to produce, and under a multiplicity of pen-names. Often his publishers provided him in advance with a title, a plot and a synopsis. An author such as Cook "belonged to the publishers", Christine Bold observes; "he was only one element in the material which they shaped for the market". The central contention of her witty, alert study *Selling the Wild West* is that the tension between a publisher's formula and an author's imagination offers the true suspense of a Western.

Bold recapitulates the history of the genre, from James Fenimore Cooper's classic romances of the frontier to the literary "anti-Westerns" that Edward Abbey, E. L. Doctorow, Ishmael Reed and other novelists have created in the past quarter-century. Distance from their subject-matter was in many cases a blessing for the practitioners of Westerns; a turn-of-the-century writer called Emerson Hough had been, Bold speculates, too close to real life on the frontier for him to adhere entirely to the formula. Bold is very much a critic for the 1980s: keen-eyed for every discordance, stress or hesitation, and willing to extrapolate at length on everything from Zane Grey's semi-colons to the footnotes of Louis L'Amour. Her prose is annoying and perspicacious in about equal parts. For every instance of post-structuralist hyperbole ("The *Unforgotten* shows how the diagrammatic quality of language can become its primary meaning in the formulaic text"), she has an incisive perception ("The frame which surrounds

painted figures was important in all [Remington's] work, for he made a boundary line the major structuring principle in his fiction as well as his art"). Yet Bold gives little sense of enjoyment of her vast material, and her strongest adjective of praise appears to be "clever".

The cleverest aspect of her own writing is the adroit way in which *Selling the Wild West* blends linguistic, literary, biographical and historical analysis of the Western genre. At moments she teeters on the brink of a political analysis too: "it becomes clear that the different kinds of power offered to readers are actually the bait by which the publishers fitted their audience into their commercial scheme". Unfortunately, she shies away from examining many of the political questions raised by Westerns, and especially by the work of the enormously successful Louis L'Amour, at least fifty-five of whose books have sold more than a million copies each. Bold quotes one of L'Amour's heroes, who believes that "the feeding time comes around there's nothing hawk likes better than a nice fat, peaceful dove". But she fails to ask whether the unbidded individualism, the constant resort to violence, the contempt for most of mankind, and the distrust of friendship, tenderness and communal effort in L'Amour's writings make him a dangerous as well as an inadequate fabulist. This is the man who, in Ronald Reagan's America, became the first novelist ever to receive a Congressional gold medal, and who in 1984 was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

For Bold, the few Western writers who stand out from the competing horde are those who take the conventions of the form as their implicit subject. She admires Alan Le May's novel *The Searchers* for "detaching the signifier from its signification". But for a reader of *Selling the Wild West* the most memorable and haunting figure is that of Frederick Faust, whose output makes even Louis L'Amour seem sluggardly. Under twenty pseudonyms Faust published 196 novels, 226 novelettes, and 162 stories. Dr Kildare was one of his creations; in the realm of the Western, where he used the name "Max Brand", he originated the Montana Kid, Silverport, Dan Barry and many other heroes. Yet Faust had become a novelist only as a way of supporting his beloved poetry. Christine Bold discerns in his Westerns "increasingly neat mythical patterns" and an "increasingly strong tone of irony". But the strongest impression her chapter about him conveys is of a man who suffered torments because of his self-betrayal: a writer whose manufacturing destroyed what he had valued most.

## The Floral Costumier by JOHN MOLE

(after Duffy)  
Open his scented  
wardrobe, find  
the little silken  
arum lilies.  
From their green  
hangers they  
drift towards you  
blowing kisses.  
There is the soft  
art of nightdress  
in its undrained  
to your ankles.

or the sweetness  
rising, moist  
and downy between  
lip and lip.  
They are his fingers'  
dream of nakedness  
made flesh,  
an incarnation  
of their touch  
from root to blossom  
love's amazement  
and a perfect fit.

# Masked correspondent, man of silence

Helen McNeil

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\$37 each.

MICHAEL J. COLACURCIO (Editor)  
New Essays on "The Scarlet Letter"  
164pp. Cambridge University Press.  
\$20 (paperback, \$6.95).  
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AGNES McNEILL DONOHUE  
Hawthorne: Calvin's ironic stepchild  
359pp. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press;  
distributed in the UK by Eurospan. £27.50.  
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SAMUEL CHASE COALE  
In Hawthorne's Shadow: American romance  
from Melville to Mailer  
245pp. Lexington: University of Kentucky  
Press; distributed in the UK by Harper and  
Row. £21.75.  
0 8131 1545 0  
EDWARD STOKES  
Hawthorne's Influence on Dickens and George  
Elliot  
289pp. University of Queensland Press. £25.  
0 7022 1689 5

Of all the nineteenth-century American writers who were honoured by their contemporaries, only Hawthorne, seen by modern readers as attractively ambiguous, has survived with his literary reputation undiminished. The continuing prominence of Hawthorne's tales and romances contrasts, however, with the fate of his letters, which have been lost, bowdlerized and misread virtually from the moment of their composition. These two volumes, part of the Ohio State Centenary Edition of Hawthorne's works, make up most of what is the first complete collection of his letters.

The imbalance between fiction and letters is a direct consequence of Hawthorne's fame during his lifetime. The uncertain status of letters, notebooks and diaries as literary artefacts and the physical possession of unique copies by family and associates means that these "personal" writings can be shaved down until they fit the shape of polite contemporary fame. (Anyone who thinks this was an exclusively Victorian practice should check the provenance of Sylvia Plath's *Letters Home*.) Hawthorne, however, seems to have been trimmed more visibly than most. For his 1884 biography, Julian Hawthorne used carefully selected passages from his father's letters. Sophia Peabody Hawthorne cut and inked out large sections of her husband's letters and notebooks, but carefully preserved the remaining fragments as evidence of their great love and Hawthorne's great sensibility. When Henry James inspected the notebooks he found them "loathsome", and the literary business letters excited little comment.

Our image of Hawthorne must be changed by these hundreds of letters from his youth and his most productive years as a writer. It is, however, only one of this collection's many treasures: that the letters display the marks of censorship, contradiction, cunning and absence. The novelty is that these qualities can no longer be attributed solely to meddlesome editors; they must now be ascribed to Hawthorne himself as well.

The other group of Hawthorne's intimate correspondents were the lifelong friends he made at Bowdoin College: the "best friend", generous, hearty Horatio Bridge, who became a naval purser; the future president Franklin Pierce; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (at college only an acquaintance); and Jonathan Cilley, who was killed in a duel in 1838. The image of a Hawthorne who, as Henry James put it, "ignored the good society of his native place almost completely" was partly created by Hawthorne's own editing of his life. Whether by choice or by accident, no letters to Cilley survive; Bridge obligingly destroyed many sent to him, and censored others. The record of Hawthorne's unsuccessful courtship of Mary

Thorne's letters are deliberate presentations of self for specific ends. Hawthorne knew his audiences. The letters mediate, protect, hide, cosset and deny, always in relation to what must have been a vividly imagined other; they are so precisely geared to their recipients' needs and expectations, their style and tone so well chosen to achieve the desired effect, it is no wonder he felt "it is of no use trying to say any real thing in a letter".

Very occasionally Hawthorne uses a correspondent as a pretext for expressing some inner doubt. Sending J. T. Fields the finished manuscript of *The Scarlet Letter*, he wishes he could have relieved the "shadows of the story" with "so much light as I would gladly have thrown in". The wish imputes to his audience and publisher a need for sunniness which Hawthorne also felt himself. *The Scarlet Letter* was well received, but Hawthorne again seized upon Fields to say that he would have liked to "pour some setting sunshine" over the conclusion of *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Hawthorne's more intimate letters indicate that he was not a man who could balance many attachments, and that his strongest bonds were formed early. The first hints of sensitivity, if not yet of talent, come in the unhappy letters Hawthorne sent his mother when he was first at boarding-school: "Why was I not a girl that I might have been pinned all my life to my mother's apron?" The pull of a reclusive, needy mother, widowed when Hawthorne was four, and two sisters who never married, gave Hawthorne an early and lasting sense of guilty inadequacy. To Elizabeth, his intelligent and literary older sister, he wrote the bitter post-graduation letter presaging his incredible exhibition of negative will over the next twelve years: "[I] shall never realise" the family's high "opinion of my talents . . . I shall never make a distinguished figure in the world." He will not leave home or enter a profession during this period, he will not earn a living despite his mother's straitened means, and he will also not stop writing, though he destroys much of what he writes, including letters. Only twelve survive for the period 1825-36.

The family letters were naturally few while Hawthorne lived at home in Salem, but when they resumed after his marriage, the intimacy was gone. Hawthorne hid his three-year engagement to the eminently acceptable Sophia Peabody until a few months before they married. A pained letter from Elizabeth to Sophia, one of several family letters reprinted as notes, records the hurt this secrecy caused: "I do not recognize [Nathaniel's] right to speak of truth, after keeping us so long in ignorance of this affair . . . It was especially due to my mother that she should long ago have been acquainted with the engagement of her only son." Hawthorne underscored the rift by refusing to let Sophia call his mother "mother" or his sisters "sister". She took up the familiarity anyway, often penning Hawthorne's refusals for him.

After the Hawthornes' first child, Una, was born, it is Sophia who writes to Hawthorne's more tractable younger sister Louisa that they will wait until the baby is five months old before visiting Salem, even though she and Una are about to travel to Boston. Hawthorne adds at the bottom: "Write immediately, I have fully made up my mind not to visit at present." Sophia's sweet diplomacy was meant to suggest to her in-laws that she was in command of the domestic situation. It does seem from the letters, however, that once Hawthorne found happiness with his wife, he dropped his first, familial set of women as if they were bad memories of his years in what the notebooks call "this dismal and assiduous chamber".

The other group of Hawthorne's intimate correspondents were the lifelong friends he made at Bowdoin College: the "best friend", generous, hearty Horatio Bridge, who became a naval purser; the future president Franklin Pierce; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (at college only an acquaintance); and Jonathan Cilley, who was killed in a duel in 1838. The image of a Hawthorne who, as Henry James put it, "ignored the good society of his native place almost completely" was partly created by Hawthorne's own editing of his life. Whether by choice or by accident, no letters to Cilley survive; Bridge obligingly destroyed many sent to him, and censored others. The record of Hawthorne's unsuccessful courtship of Mary

Silsbee survives only in a sardonic account (to J. L. O'Sullivan) of their last meeting. In this letter Hawthorne uses a measured Johnsonian cadence to represent his writerly superiority to the lady's performance skills, which even so "altogether constituted a perfect work of art".

For a literary man Hawthorne wrote few literary letters, or few that survive. He shows little interest in abstract thought or criticism. While other writers are occasionally mentioned, they are friends or sources or youthful reading (Scott, Southey, etc) or in the current literary periodicals, which Hawthorne does seem to have read with great care. Nor is he readily allusive. Spenser, whose allegorical imagination was one of his major models, is mentioned lightly, as are Shakespeare, Cervantes and the Bible; they serve as sources for tags, with the source spelled out if the recipient is not literary. In a cunningly diffident letter to Longfellow in 1836, Hawthorne wrote that he had "indeed, turned over a great many books, but in so desultory a way that it cannot be called study, nor has it left me the fruits of study". He then offered Longfellow a hostage to interpretation by advancing the line that his life of "no external excitement" in Salem had made him almost unfit for writing—almost, but not quite, since he knew (but didn't tell Longfellow) that he had by then already written the stories of *Twice-Told Tales*, which were to bring him to public notice. The purpose of the letter was to reacquaint Longfellow with him in hopes of the future favourable review that Longfellow did indeed write. For this purpose, Longfellow's playful use of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* to compare Hawthorne's "environments" with those of the German Romantic Jean Paul was inadequate, so Hawthorne replaced it with his own fiction of himself.

Like his fiction, Hawthorne's letters do not offer extended or detailed scene-painting; that was to be the work of the notebooks. Instead of landscape there is considerable attention to emotional spirit of place. To Evert Duyckinck, who had just sent on some British praise of *Twice-Told Tales*, Hawthorne wrote a lovely evocation of his life in 1842 at the Old Manse near Concord:

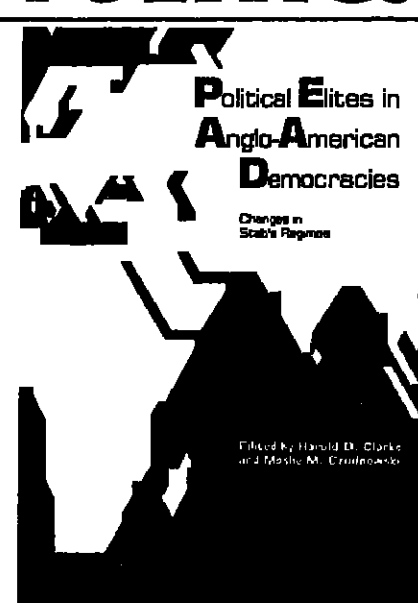
I live in an old parsonage, the most quiet place I believe, in the whole world, with woods close at hand, and a river at the bottom of my orchard, and an old battle-field under my window. Everybody that comes here falls asleep, there is such an unearthly quiet; but for my own part, I feel as if, for the first time in my life, I was awake. I have found a really, though it looks very much like some of my old dreams.

The letter is a perfect portrait of the Romantic artist at peace, with Sophia edited out; it is also perfectly aimed at the influential editor Duyckinck. Duyckinck published the Library of American Books series, which opened with Horatio Bridge's *Journal of an African Cruiser*, edited by Hawthorne, and went on to publish Poe, Melville, and eventually Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Duyckinck did not publish Thoreau; Hawthorne used the influence he had established by 1845 to puncture what he felt was Thoreau's pretentiousness: "He is the most unmanageable fellow alive—the most tedious, tiresome, and intolerable—the narrowest and most notional."

The greatest absence among Hawthorne's letters is his apparently lost correspondence with Herman Melville, whom he met in 1851 through Duyckinck. Hawthorne's notebooks make it clear that Melville arrived too late in his life for the passionate discourse which Melville desperately wanted. The surviving letters, while not profound, show by their very amiability a greater ease than might have been assumed: Elizabeth Melville and Sophia Hawthorne got on well; the men enjoyed riding together; Hawthorne asked Melville to look out for a box waiting at the post office in Pittsfield, and if possible to buy him a kitchen-clock while he is in town. Even so, Hawthorne's notably bland tone in these letters must have been aimed at cooling off Melville. If there were letters in which Hawthorne took on the implications of his influence on the composition of *Moby-Dick*, they would have been unique in his practice.

In the session on these letters at the recent Modern Language Association conference in New York, Nina Baym remarked that the real Hawthorne is not necessarily any more present in his letters than in his other writings. Indeed,

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since letters are arguably the most audience-conscious kind of composition, they may well be less "real" than the notebooks which, at least until his marriage, Hawthorne wrote for himself alone. In his study *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Lionel Trilling argued that Romantic sincerity always involves the representation of oneself as sincere to an audience; authenticity, by contrast, is inner, a self-directed goal. In Trilling's terminology, some of Hawthorne's letters are sincere, particularly those to Sophia — though a Romantic lover would also wish to be seen to be sincere. But by definition none can be authentic.

A conflict between inner and outer, or between self and the social manifestations of self, is the theme of many of Hawthorne's fictions and notebook meditations, but in the letters that conflict is being enacted. The 1842 letter interdicting the term "mother" displayed a neurotic drive to control intimacies by keeping them separate. That drive is, however, linked to a powerful argument in which intimacy and its expression in speech are felt to be incompatible. Hawthorne begins with family practices:

We are conscious of one another's feelings, always; but there seems to be a tacit law, that our deepest heart-concernments are not to be spoken of. I cannot gush out in their presence — I cannot take my heart in my hand and show it to them. There is a feeling within me (though I know it is a foolish one) as if it would be as indecorous to do so, as to display to them the naked breast.

Hawthorne wonders if this "incapacity of free communion" is a punishment "for something wrong in our early intercourse" — whether of the family or of humankind he does not specify. But he accepts this fallen condition because it yields him the gift of wordless intimacy:

I doubt whether I ever have really spoken of thee, to any person. I have spoken the name of Sophia, it is true; but the idea in my mind was apart from thee — it embraced nothing of thine inner and essential self; it was an outward and faintly-traced shadow that I summoned up, to perform thy part.

The imagery of "The Snow-Image" and *The Scarlet Letter* (among others) is intimately in this letter. If such a radical Platonism infuses Hawthorne's view of language, then any willed expression would have been seen by him as tinged with falsehood. It must be so because it is communication rather than communion.

Like Emily Dickinson a generation later, Hawthorne practised a profoundly "written" art. He never relished American vernacular, as Emerson and Whitman did, and he loathed the mid-century oratorical mode. Sophia found his conversation "marmoreal", by which she meant that it had the clarity, purity and timelessness she associated with literary classics.

Hawthorne believed language to be the dress of thought, rather than thought itself; his fictions and prefaces sought to approximate invisible and inexpressible thoughts through the homage of appropriately transparent language. Writing may then commune with its epistemological origins. He did not consider that writing could, or should, represent material reality directly or that it should purport to take its form from immediate social phenomena. Such a refusal of the social contract of discourse meant, among other things, that Hawthorne kept his audience at a distance even when (as the letters indicate) some of his readers did recognize and admire at least the general tendency of his style.

Hawthorne's view of writing meant that for something merely to be written was not a guarantee of authenticity. The non-literariness of letters could actually make them less, rather than more, authentic, if they were designed, like oratorical rhetoric, to convince a specific audience. The usual paradigms of literary artificiality and spontaneity do not seem to work on Hawthorne. Perhaps, too, this primacy of the written may hint at the deep necessity of symbolic language for Hawthorne's fiction. In Bakhtin's terms, Hawthorne is a monologic writer, with symbolism and narrative outweighing discourse. Yet he does not exploit his omniscient power, preferring instead to ascribe power to symbols: these images resonate in the thought of everyone in a society, but their full meanings evade speech. The more meanings the people of Salem offer for

Hester's scarlet letter, the more it grows beyond anyone's grasp. Perhaps behind the monologic novelist and the diffident, masked correspondent stands the figure of the silent writer. Certainly, if the chimerical "real" Hawthorne exists, it is as a man of silence.

Many of Sophia's excisions have an exciting effect on modern readers. In 1839, for example, Sophia had a nasty cold which Hawthorne felt he knew how to cure: "I really do feel as if I could cure her, [excision] kiss that should [excision] enquire better into her bosom, more entirely than any kiss ever did before." This comedy of repression arises from Sophia's all-too-conscious efforts to excise what was communion, and therefore not to be spoken of, and to make public property of what was conventional. At the close of the second volume of letters, when Hawthorne is a successful public man, trading favours in his friend Pierce's administration, there is no need for excisions, since the discourse already consists of materialist shadows.

The letters are splendidly edited in this library edition. My one complaint is that the running commentary on Hawthorne's correspondents forces the reader who has not memorized it to search for identifications; an alphabetical listing and perhaps family trees of the Hawthornes and Peabodys would have been helpful.

*New Essays on "The Scarlet Letter"* begins with the series editor wearily informing us that "In literary criticism the last twenty-five years have been particularly fruitful." The introductory essay by Michael Colacurcio, who edited this collection, gives a thorough history of Hawthorne criticism, while quietly regretting what he finds to be the anti-humanist trend of recent deconstructionist readings. The stage seems set for a collection of study aids, but instead come four long revisionist essays, most of which increase our appreciation of Hawthorne's deviousness. Michael Davitt Bell offers a powerful radical re-reading of the Custom House Preface; it is "not a straightforward declaration of artistic intention, and . . . certainly not a theoretical definition of a distinctive American mode of fiction". David van Leer sees *The Scarlet Letter* as an attack on the powers of sympathy which its narrative voice purports to praise, while Colacurcio argues for an unliberated, Winthropesque narrator. Carol Benskin takes the easier task (after Tony Tanner's *Adultery and the Novel*) of comparing Hawthorne's and Tolstoy's novels of adultery, finding a surprising "comprehensive naturalism" in Hawthorne.

The other studies all deal with questions of influence. The undergraduate Hawthorne who grumbled to his sister about being "compelled to go to meeting every Sunday, and to hear a red hot Calvinist sermon from the President, or some other dealer in fire and brimstone" does not seem a likely protagonist for Agnes McNeill Donohue's *Hawthorne: Calvin's ironic stepchild*. In the letters, Hawthorne's strongest affinity is with the Quakers; he twice expresses a rather more than joking interest in joining the Society of Friends, and his love letters significantly adopt the Quaker "thou" in their form of address.

The letters are, however, not the whole Hawthorne, and Donohue offers thematic readings of many of Hawthorne's tales of innate depravity, and of *The Scarlet Letter*, which Hawthorne described to Fields as "positively a h-l-f-d story". Donohue cites Calvin's Institutes but does not deal with the question of the historic survival of Calvinist theology into the nineteenth century. The secular Hawthorne, and much recent Hawthorne criticism, is ignored. The argument is marred by an excessively knowing attitude about the Hawthornes' personalities — for example, Sophia was "the eternal featherheaded optimist", while "He wanted to die". It is more likely that Hawthorne worked up Puritanism as a historical correlative for guilts and doubts that were personal. As Bell showed in *Hawthorne and the Historical Romance of New England*, the precedents for such "use" of Puritanism were numerous.

Samuel Chase Coale's *In Hawthorne's Shadow: American romance from Melville to Mailer* begins appropriately by quoting Haw-

thorne's "lost" notebook on the "fund of evil in every human heart". His study adopts Richard Chase's definition of an American romance genre somewhat uncritically, and some of his speculations would better have been left out. The book's effort is, however, not to write a history of romance, gothic, or Calvinism but to sketch a less specifically generic line of dark metaphysics forward from Hawthorne through Faulkner, Carson McCullers, Norman Mailer, John Gardner, Joyce Carol Oates and, less predictably, John Cheever, John Updike and Joan Didion. It is debatable whether such a broad line should be attributed to a single literary influence, and if so, whether Hawthorne or Charles Brockden Brown was the American progenitor. By offering such a broad foreground for much recent writing Coale mounts an implicit attack on a post-modernist reading of contemporary American fiction. Since he finished his study, new evidence of Hawthorne's shadow has appeared in *Roger's Version*, John Updike's magnificent rewrite of *The Scarlet Letter*.

In *Dickens the Novelist* Q. D. Leavis speculated that Dickens might have used the "highly stylized settings" of *The Scarlet Letter* as the basis for the "simple settings", salvational conclusion and sense of guilt in *Great Expectations*. Edward Stokes's *Hawthorne's Influence on Dickens and George Eliot* makes the factual case for such transatlantic influence, though he sees it more in *Bleak House*. The case with George Eliot is even clearer, though also hitherto underemphasized. In 1852 she declared Hawthorne "a great favourite of mine". Not only do Arthur Donithorne and Hester (Hetty) Sorrell owe their names to Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne, but the structure of *Adam Bede*, with its prison interview and silent heroines, is also indebted to *The Scarlet Letter*, though it is perhaps more of a critical revision than a homage. Stokes's study is cautious and sometimes stilted, but makes a contribution to the growing case for a more equally weighted cultural interdependence of Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century.

vision. For Melville there can be only glancing views. Yet as glancing views, theirs are valuable indeed. Melville, according to Dillingham, is concerned essentially with survival in a world of darkness and disorder. The surfaces of this world cannot be peeled back and made to display an underlying meaning because they are in effect mirrors. They reflect solipsistically the image of the beholder. As mirrors they are potentially instruments of self-understanding and hence survival, or of self-transcendence, which is a form of suicide. In *Moby-Dick* the surface of the sea is a mirror that provides a means for Melville's soul-searching. In order to survive, one must sound the depths of the mirrored image of the oceanic self. Melville can say even of the Transcendentalist Emerson, about whom he was equivocal, "I love all men who die." He associates Ishmael, the survivor, with metaphors of diving and delving. Ahab's quest for meaning outside himself leads to a destructive war within.

Four of Dillingham's chapters are devoted to *Moby-Dick*, two to *Pierre*, one to *Israel Potter* (the "underrated" narrative of a veteran of the American Revolution adrift in England), two to *The Confidence-Man*, and one to *Billy Budd*. All of them are designed to sustain the idea of the self-examined life as the key to survival. In support of this purpose, Dillingham introduces some curious information and heretical notions. For instance, Gnostic doctrine justifies Ahab's disdain for Jehovah, a mere demigod, and at the same time permits him to maintain his religious nature intact; *Pierre*, misled by the pseudo-science of physiognomy, misreads the faces of others because he sees in them his own features; the Confidence Man is a benign alchemist, an "adept" in the practice of "mystical" rather than "metaphysical" alchemy and therefore a master of the art of self-knowledge, who can transmute leaden lives into gold.

Despite his application of esoteric lore and his sometimes "unconventional" readings, Dillingham is a critic of the older sort. This is

thorne's "lost" notebook on the "fund of evil in every human heart". His study adopts Richard Chase's definition of an American romance genre somewhat uncritically, and some of his speculations would better have been left out. The book's effort is, however, not to write a history of romance, gothic, or Calvinism but to sketch a less specifically generic line of dark metaphysics forward from Hawthorne through Faulkner, Carson McCullers, Norman Mailer, John Gardner, Joyce Carol Oates and, less predictably, John Cheever, John Updike and Joan Didion. It is debatable whether such a broad line should be attributed to a single literary influence, and if so, whether Hawthorne or Charles Brockden Brown was the American progenitor. By offering such a broad foreground for much recent writing Coale mounts an implicit attack on a post-modernist reading of contemporary American fiction. Since he finished his study, new evidence of Hawthorne's shadow has appeared in *Roger's Version*, John Updike's magnificent rewrite of *The Scarlet Letter*.

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his third book in a methodical progress through the Melville canon. He knows the literature and deploys it with consideration. He is committed to reading carefully and arguing logically. In short, this is a book that might have been written twenty years ago but is not in the least out of date, nor will it be for a long time to come.

Robert Martin's monograph on male friendship in Melville's sea novels is more a product of the times. While there are few readers who have not been led to muse on the haunting beauty of Billy Budd or the wedding night of Ishmael and Queequeg, only recently has it been possible to treat the homosexual dimension in Melville with ease. Martin does so, and with subtlety, candour and compassion. He identifies three basic characters in the sea novels: the hero or experiencing self; the dark stranger, an erotic and mythic force of nature; and the captain, the repressive legal authority, and charts their interplay beginning with *Typee* (not precisely a "sea novel") and featuring *Redburn*, *White-Jacket*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Billy Budd*. His readings enhance our grasp of the text but he has extra-literary objectives towards which, for example, he bends Billy Budd.

Dillingham reminds us that as Melville composed *Billy Budd*, he had before him a motto copied out in his own hand: "Keep true to the dreams of thy youth." Dillingham's sympathies are on Captain Vere's failure to keep true. Martin, however, is concerned with Billy's failure. His charge is that Billy "declines to rebel, out of loyalty to a false system" and since his "appeal is pederastic . . . he is therefore inadequate to the locus of the erotic energy that Melville felt necessary to combat tyranny". In the case of *Moby-Dick*, Martin concludes that "it is love alone, as manifested in the marriage of Ishmael and Queequeg, that can offer an alternative to the impending apocalypse" and this leads him to assert that "Melville seriously believed in the radical social potential of male homosexuality as a force in the creation of a new egalitarian society".

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PETER STITT  
The World's Hieroglyphic Beauty: Five American poets  
320. Athens: University of Georgia Press. 080307726

"He is a poet of the utmost ambition and the most care; he is prolific; and he is at an age when most poets have only just begun to find a voice," wrote Helen Vendler of Dave Smith's *Cumberland Station*, published in 1976.

*Cumberland Station* was Smith's breakthrough volume; its technical perfections won critical reviews across the United States, and after it he was generally recognized as the leading poet of his generation. His subsequent work determinedly set about fulfilling that promise, but often in an oblique, not wholly satisfactory way. His two most recent books, *Homage to Edgar Allan Poe* (1981) and *In the House of the Judge* (1983), although both spectacularly crafted, belong in the end in some halo of the divine average, "Top Quality Creative Writing" stamped on every page.

Smith, of course, has been heavily involved in Creative Writing Programs since they first began to mushroom in the mid-1970s, and remained in *Local Assays*, a collection of miscellaneous prose pieces, are two essays defending them as articulately as they are ever likely to be defended, not with the usual lame analogies to the workshops of Quattrocento Italy, but as serious moral institutions "entrusted with educating, recording and even sustaining the best that will be thought or felt about human nature". For the students they are an unmitigated blessing, but Smith is less sure of their benefits to the poet-teacher who may "give his own censor and his own energies so fully to his students that he has little left for his own work". But this surely undermines his whole argument. In a recent anthology of around 100 younger American poets edited by Smith and David Bottoms, only the merest handful didn't touch creative writing. In this light, mightn't the system behave more like some Kafkaesque labyrinth that offers early encouragement only to extort a long and stifling revenge?

To anyone familiar with Smith's work there are few surprises in the preferences underlying this collection. In a rather pompous apologia he outlines the duties of "good responsible writing" as "unity, clarity, totality, and purpose" before skimming briefly with the minutiae, and all forms of minimalism; Olson is eccentric and Creeley stunted; *Finnegans Wake*, much of Beckett, and almost anything called Surreal is terminally boring; John Ashbery, John Hollander and James Merrill are dismissed out of hand. Smith's ideal poet is more like a sporting hero. Extended comparisons are drawn throughout with baseball, football, basketball and bawling, and the theory advanced that most of America's best poets are jocks; Jarrell, tennis; Kumin, swimming; Ransom, Frost; Whitman, baseball.

A large part of the book is devoted to critical pieces drawn from *Poetry* and *American Poetry Review*. Smith's policy is to review only what he likes, so there are more tributes than assessments. He writes excellently on Robert Penn Warren, whom he ranks above Robert Lowell, on Richard Hugo, whom he links with Willie Sargent of the Pirates, and on Louis Simpson, on Sylvia Plath, and James Dickey, although all these essays tend to swoon mawkishly towards their conclusions.

Smith is on the whole, though, both an honest and a sympathetic reviewer, and aside from a few misfires, his book is a pleasure to read. It is a pity that it is not more widely read.

It is possible to disagree with everything Turco says and still find this book superbly engrossing. In this he is like Bateson, and these are really essays in critical dissent. The heresies are innumerable, and not always explained: "Dryden was a rather uniformly bad writer . . . It is patent that Samuel Johnson was not a great writer . . ." and so on. His discussion of Stevens is particularly wilful; it sets him first "at the opposite pole from Emerson", rejects his later work as "sterile", and finally prefers Conrad Aiken altogether. That should go down well in New Haven. Yet in the process he says a great many interesting things. This is typical of a book that is brilliantly written, continually challenging, and almost always wrong.

Holden's *Style and Authenticity in Postmodern Poetry* is altogether more solid. Like Emerson, Holden trained first as a mathematician, but where Emerson tends to transfigure his texts, Holden demystifies. He is as upset as Turco by talk of free form, but he seeks a more practical solution in the idea of contexts buried but implicit in the poem. Nothing exists in a vacuum. This is an obvious point, but Holden's demonstrations of the interdependences of all poetry draw refreshingly on young, less well-known poets - Gary Gildner, Ted Kooser, Reg Saner - and are always perceptive.

Richard Hugo emerges, again, as the representative major poet, though Simpson, William Stafford, and Philip Levine also score well. Ashbery is castigated for being too remote from common experience, and Robert Bly for trying to get too close to it. This is in the end, though, a rather negative definition of postmodernism, as racked by nostalgia for an earlier innocence and grandeur, and one that ignores many of the more interesting experiments of recent years.

Peter Stitt's *The World's Hieroglyphic Beauty* has an original format, pairing essays on and interviews with five poets, Richard Wilbur, Stafford, Simpson, Wright, and Penn Warren. Not much else is new, though; the essays are dull, and the theme tells it all: "William Stafford's Wilderness Quest"; "James Wright: In Search of the American Self"; "James Wright: The Quest for Home". The interviews are in the 1970s, and have been all "look place". These are all top-calibre poets but "updated". These are all top-calibre poets but "updated". These are all top-calibre poets but "updated".

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## The privileged lonely line

## D. W. Hartnett

JAMES MERRILL  
Reclutative

Edited by J. D. McClatchy  
202pp. San Francisco: North Point Press. \$12.50. 0865472556

The two volumes of verse which James Merrill published in 1982 - *From the First Nine* and *The Changing Light at Sandover* - constitute his Collected Poems. Now, four years later, comes *Reclutative*, the Collected Prose. J. D. McClatchy has assembled and lightly edited what was hitherto only accessible in back issues of journals and defunct little magazines. Here, in all the miscellaneous prose a reader of Merrill could want.

There is much here to enjoy. "Acoustical Chambers" travels through Merrill's privileged yet lonely childhood, treating us *en route* to vivid thumbnail sketches of "Mademoiselle" - the governess familiar to readers of that extraordinary poem of memory and forgetting, "Lost in Translation" - and the poet's own father, an alarming combination, as "Yánnina" suggests, of the tyrannical and the indulgent. Here too are stories like "Driver", combining his semi-allegorical treatment of the poetic quest with an early adumbration of the occult; and "Peru: the Landscape Game", in which a minutely evoked landscape is weirdly re-absorbed into the workings of the imagination, a process typical of the later poetry. "The Beaten Path" evokes a youthful trip to the Far East with an attentiveness reminiscent of Witter Bynner's oriental translations, while "Notes on Corot" reads like a small-scale version of Proust's confrontation with the Vinteuil sonata - the writer tries to grapple directly with a non-verbal medium but has to surrender to the serpentine approximations of language.

In his foreword, Merrill affects an impatience with prose: "I persist in seeing it as a mildly nightmarish medium, to which there is no end . . . With prose, as I saw it, the aria never came. All was recitative . . ." Yet, as the operatic metaphor acknowledges, this antagonism presupposes a mutual reliance between poetry and prose. The ideal poetry, "durchkomponiert" according to the best post-Wagnerian models, remains unattainable. As Auden remarks in "The Dyer's Hand": "A purely poetic language would be unlearnable, a purely prosaic not worth learning." In fact, Merrill's poetry has been constantly nourished by prose. *The (Diblos) Notebook's* revisionary textures and unstable authorial persona lead directly to <



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## At the other end of travel

### John Clute

MARIANNE WIGGINS  
*Herself in Love*  
184pp. Collins. £9.95.  
0002231476

In the longest and loosest of the stories collected in *Herself in Love*, a young married man flees westward across contemporary America by old-fashioned train, only to find that the end of his journey in Los Angeles is also the end of his tether. There is no wilderness to hide in. He boards the next train back to New York. But "Gandy Dancing" ends before its failed Huckleberry Finn reaches home again, where he must begin to live out the consequences of his doomed fugue, and that may be the reason why this story, despite its dark felicitous of observation and its loving knowledge of the terminal days of Amtrak, lacks the touchy complexity of Marianne Wiggins's best work.

The best and most excruciating stories in this fine book deal with survivors at the other end of travel, men and women whose moment of significant journeying has passed. Most of Wiggins's protagonists are internally exiled,

and several of them are literal expatriates. The author is herself an American living in England, and a vivid sense of the tightrope-walk of exile focuses the sharpest of her tales. Dense, spiky, guarded and extremely competent, these tales speak in barbed, self-sufficient rhythms of making a life in strange surroundings. This alienated territory may be England for an American, as in "Herself in Love", or old age for a passionate heart, as in "Among the Impressionists" or "Ridin' up Front with Carl and Marl", but displacement is always central.

There can be no avoiding the sense that there is something bleak and chilling about the estrangement that moulds these expatriate lives. At the same time, though none of the stories in *Herself in Love* could be described as markedly joyous, an almost ribald bravery and grace does infuse Wiggins's hard-etched portraits. Her protagonists dive into their loves and jealousies, and succumb to the stranglehold of passion, with a defiant *sprezzatura* that helps make reading her remarkable stories a decidedly bracing experience. This is an intensely active book.

At times it is too active. There are moments of pugnacious overwriting; the narrative pre-

sense is applied too facetiously and too often, and becomes a kind of stylistic bludgeon quite unsuited to the complex patterns of a story like "Ridin' up Front with Carl and Marl"; at times the urge to create tales of a self-sufficiently knottedness, or of a sleight-of-hand virtuosity that demands re-reading without necessarily rewarding it. But these are cavils. "Stonewall Jackson's Wife" is one of the finest ghost stories of recent years, not only a technical triumph but a vision of the family, of love and solitude, and of the milieu of the American Civil War, whose difficulty is absolutely essential to the reality conveyed. "3 Geniuses" may be too knotty, but on reflection unfolds into a sequence of parables whose implications swell richly in the mind. "The Gentleman Arms", a monitory tale of exile and of the cost of ageing, becomes, in its brilliant final paragraphs, a quiet but deeply chastening statement of our shared human condition. "Herself in Love" is desperately and comically acute. Though she has published three novels (*Separate Checks*, 1984, is available in paperback in the United Kingdom), this is Marianne Wiggins's first collection of stories; it has presence, weight and toughness, and is likely to endure.

## Savoury's organ

### Christopher Hawtree

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE  
*Picture Palace*  
209pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
0297 790390

No articles written, no money earned, but 50 pages of the novel are done. This is the first time that I have been really sure that something I was writing was first-rate. I do a piece of the book and it seems to me to good that I'm half delirious with happiness.

Malcolm Muggeridge recorded in his diary fifty-five years and innumerable articles ago. Such joy came with being ensconced in a Moscow suburb and at work on a novel about a Manchester newspaper. "And then after a while," he continues, "looking back I'm more doubtful. Is it to go good?" A hope that "Old Savory [sic] with his moods is a fascinating character. His death - writing a New Year letter - will be magnificent." And, a few sentences on, "most of what I have done will stand. The parallel between Savory and C. P. Scott is very close. I fear it may be unsafe. But can't be helped."

Turned down by Putnam and by an equally nervous Rupert Hart-Davis at Cape, *Picture Palace* (as it was later "vilely renamed") was accepted by Douglas Jerrold at Eyre and Spottiswoode, and was to have been published on September 28, 1934. By which time, Muggeridge, "singularly uninterested, unrelated" at this event, was on a steamer bound for India and the assistant editorship of the Calcutta *Statesman*, a period which was to be made none the happier by a rash contract for a book on Samuel Butler. Telegrams informed him of the fiction's regress: its withdrawal had become necessary, and only if Muggeridge were able to wire £2,000 to fight the case could the publisher

avoid having to settle out of court. "No living person comes in the book", Muggeridge had told himself in Russia, almost wilfully ignoring the seedy atmosphere which surrounded his depiction of the sensitive *Manchester Guardian*, an organ apparently living off the proceeds of a down-market evening sister-paper.

It would hardly be fair to pluck Muggeridge's remark out of context and apply it now that *Picture Palace* has been reissued as something of a curiosity (extracts - though the publisher forbears to mention it - were printed in the *New Statesman* some fifteen years ago). "As a work of fiction it cannot be said to be a success", comments Muggeridge's biographer Richard Ingrams in a short introduction. The death of old Savory, done pungently enough, is not exactly magnificent; in any case, this matter of leader-writing technique has been pre-empted by the classic account, in *The Green Stick*, of Muggeridge's own first attempt at the genre, from ascertaining which line one should adopt to a flourish culled from the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

Such satire, depending as it does on a good deal too much prior knowledge on the reader's part, hardly makes for a *Scoop* or a *Towards the End of the Morning*; it has more in common with Wyndham Lewis's similarly suppressed *The Roaring Queen*. Where it does succeed is as an autobiographical variant (rather as Leonard Woolf's *The Wise Virgins* did), one which shows a man of decided views about others but unsure of himself. Not only does the familiar, wracked sense of a quest bring one Pettygreave and his wife, Gertrude, to life, it also calls to mind Blake and the danger of building "a Hell in Heaven's despite". Meanwhile, silent as autobiography, diary and Ingrams's introduction are, one would like to know why *Time of Life* - the title under which Muggeridge had originally hoped to publish the novel - has not been restored.

## Exile's return

### Antony Beevor

DOUGLAS DAY  
*Journey of the Wolf*  
245pp. Reinhardt. £10.95.  
0370 310640

A certain self-consciousness affects some English-speaking writers when they set a novel entirely in a foreign country. Perhaps afraid of their presumption, they feel obliged to demonstrate a knowledge of what they are writing about. Often, this takes the form of frequent and colourful interjections in the local language, which then requires simultaneous translation like a language cassette.

It is a pity that Douglas Day should spoil the best part of this, his first novel, in just such a way. One can hardly complain about the occasional *Hombre!*; and when an important word or phrase has an untranslatable flavour, to slip in the original can sometimes be a great advantage. But to sprinkle the text compulsively soon becomes counter-productive, even irritating.

Day's taciturn protagonist, Sebastián Rosales, is a Spaniard of the Republican diaspora, one of the many to fight in the *Maquis* during the Second World War. He had left his village at the age of seventeen on the outbreak of the Civil War and fought all the way through. In 1973, following a quarrel with his wife in southern France, he sets out on foot, without money and without papers, to return to his birthplace in the mountains south of Granada after thirty-four years of exile.

His roundabout route from Navarre takes in Guadalupe, Belchite and Teruel, the sites of the main battles in Aragón, all of which Rosales experienced: this rather obvious device enabling the author to include chunks of flashback and period history. These sections are the least convincing in the book, and not just because of the number of minor historical errors or improbabilities. The characters become stereotypes, and several of the eyewitness vignettes are already familiar - for example the description of the flight from Málaga, and the rescue of refugees from the French frontier prison, are regurgitated a flood of fascinating information, over the nose of refugees to make them drop their heads in shame; they are taking into exile.

The young Rosales's ubiquitous role in the war, although not impossible, does not lend him credibility. And at times there is that uneasy tone - factual, portentous and down to earth - so often found in a novel by a journalist.

But the old Rosales is a different matter. Here, the writing gives the impression that the author is on home ground. In his description of the veteran's return to Andalusia - sleeping rough, hitching lifts, encountering both rudeness and unexpected kindness - Day has created a memorable worm's eye view of Spain's jerry-built modernization under Franco. Even if his character is, as one suspects, partly inspired by Francisco Pérez López's *A Guerrilla Diary of the Spanish Civil War* (1972), the achievement here is still considerable. Day manages to be both sympathetic and unsentimental. The ending, however, has an unfortunate whiff of Hemingway at his macho, mawkish worst.

## Crime file

JOHN MALCOLM  
*Gothic Pursuit*  
163pp. Collins. £8.95.  
0 00 232113 0

John Malcolm's thrillers about Tim Simpson, who runs the art investment fund at White's merchant bank, are coming to have a pleasingly ritualistic quality. Tim gets wind of a hidden art treasure, starts to search for it, and finds a body; undeterred, he continues, finds another body and finally, after a reasonably violent confrontation with the villain, emerges triumphant with the work of art; the whole being accompanied by a gloomy chorus of disapprobation from his girlfriend Sue and policeman Nobby Roberts, Tim's old rugby-playing friend from Cambridge. This time, in his fifth adventure, Tim's after a piece of furniture designed by the nineteenth-century architect Richard Norman Shaw. As usual, the cape-work is deft and professional in the extreme, and, as usual, Tim reveals how he has matured into a knowledgeable art historian as he regurgitates a flood of fascinating information.

## Canned apocalypse

### Jenny Abbott

SALLY EMERSON  
*Fire Child*  
185pp. Michael Joseph. £9.95.  
07181 2832 X

In Sally Emerson's first novel, *Second Sight*, the young heroine retreats into an imaginary world, unable to cope with a confusing present. Still fascinated by the private worlds people inhabit, Emerson goes much further in *Fire Child*. By telling the story through the successive diary entries of two disturbed adolescents, she creates a London in which elemental forces seem to be at work, both in the minds of the two young lovers and beyond. Evil has come to Highbury.

The jumpy, almost histrionic tone of the novel initially suggests that Emerson wants to show us how and why people become disconnected from reality; how the surfaces of everyday life become so overcrowded and so overbearing that a cruel dislocation takes place. In fact her interests lie elsewhere. *Fire Child* is more allegory than psychological drama. The two main characters are already in conveniently definable states of psychosis when the novel opens, and - from what they reveal of their pasts - always have been.

Martin is the young pyromaniac of the title. He discovered his fascination with fire at the age of six, when he burnt down his uncle's garden shed. Several years later he does the same to the family home. Fire is "the only possible creation", the only way of reminding everyone how insignificant human life is. Martin also broods on the end of the world: not a slow entropic demise but a sudden return to the "blackness that lies at the end of all things and at the beginning". His soul-mate Tessa also discovered her peculiar power at an early age: a sexual attractiveness which promises men something "darker and more terrible and more beautiful" than they have ever experienced.

While two of her lovers die tormented by her power - one "literally screwed to death" - and a third has a nervous breakdown, she remains cold and manipulative.

She and Martin speak the same cruel language, and the attraction when they meet is spontaneous. Martin sees her as his other self, the "girl who asks me to climb down the rope of her hair into hell", and each achieves a regenerated sense of power from the relationship. Tessa is able to exact revenge on Alexander, the ex-lover who inadvertently killed her father, and Martin destroys the last reminders of life before Tessa, to concentrate on a future in which no one will be able to resist them. Through the "savagery" of their love-making, the fire child and the ice maiden create something "which will last for ever".

*Fire Child* has the dimensions of a gothic nightmare, but its landscape is decidedly suburban. Martin, although he has a worryingly bright political career ahead, is a supermarket stacker, and Tessa an estate agent's clerk. Their diaries must bear the weight of revealing not only their complicated inner lives but the mundanities of their day-to-day existence, and this is the novel's major drawback: there is no real differentiation of tone and no external point of reference. Emerson tries to give us a sense of Martin's calculating evil, but has to do so in the same voice that informs us that he once built a huge pyramid out of special-offer tins of grapefruit.

This, along with a frustratingly murky symbolism (fire, ice, flood and void), makes a potentially strong story just a little melodramatic. Highbury is probably not the easiest of places to transform into a land of preternatural forces, but Tessa and Martin never really strike us as the couple to do it, no matter how "inextricably involved" with the end of the world they think they are. Eventually their pretensions become irritating, and a prose style obviously intended to shock, but which succeeds only in amusing, does nothing to offset this. *Fire Child* keeps missing its mark.

days . . . " In her childhood babies could be left unattended. "The Lindbergh baby was still years away . . . " And orphans might be abandoned, for "either your own family took you in or you went to the orphanage - brown smocks and soupbowl haircuts . . . "

She was orphaned at eleven when her father, in a jealous rage, shot her mother and himself. Her own first lover was killed in the army before she left school, and when she was seventeen her baby's father shot himself through the heart in her bathtub. After that she became leery of emotional commitment and apt to bolt as soon as she felt a bond tighten. Before and after leaving Lee, she leaves several men who "offered . . . rings . . . at the last minute, I'd always balk".

Going where her story isn't known, she hides, works as a librarian, filing clerk and stenographer and, though never more than ninety-five miles from the aunt who raised her

and then raised Lee, she doesn't get in touch until forty years later when, having had radium treatment for cervical cancer, she returns to find the aunt dead and Lee off in the navy. Some old witnesses survive, though, and she receives confirmation of old guesses about her mother and a last letter from her father written to her before his crime. The story thus winds neatly round on itself. Its brutality has been attenuated by time and her own survival begins to look heroic. Tough and folksy, her language contributes to this effect for, paradoxically, the obsessive chronicling of the quotidian which can weigh down a text can also make it levitate. Focus on minutiae, evading realism, slides towards myth, and in the course of this remarkable novel Kate Vaiden's stature grows less because of her strange early history than because of her staying power and the plain solidity of her vision. She is a heroine of the old school: made to last.

## The poet's case-reports

### Iain Bamforth

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS  
*The Doctor Stories*  
Edited by Robert Coles  
160pp. Faber. Paperback, £3.95.  
0371 147283

As its makeshift title indicates, this is a collection of short stories - thirteen in all - written by William Carlos Williams during his working years as a medical practitioner around the Passaic, in New Jersey. Many of them originally appeared in the early 1930s in a small, politically active magazine called *Blast* (no relation to Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist publication); they are all concerned with working-class families striving to survive the Depression. The book is fleshed out with a section from the *Autobiography*, a handful of poems on medical themes, an intimate reminiscence of Williams by his son, and an affectionate foreword from Robert Coles, himself a physician and responsible for compiling this selection.

Pared down to stenographed essentials like a case-report, often tantalizingly incomplete as if compelling the reader to provide a conclusion, less stories than sketches of talk and sketches from the quotidian, the texts take stock of the human comedy with the dispassionate eye of a diagnostician. Neither pointing the finger, nor eliciting easy sympathy, their moral force extends like an aura beyond the merely factual qualities of what they describe. They reveal what life must have been like among the gas-lamps and raincoats, the vendors and elevated trains, the brass and dingy streets of the great industrial cities of the Eastern seaboard. Here are the mongrel elements of America: unfortunates strung and bewildered by their

transplantation; an Italian peasant bringing her ninth child into the world; an injured worker denied his statutory rights; an unwanted infant dying through misdiagnosis; a small-town surgeon stumbling into alcoholism and incompetence.

The best story is "The Use of Force", which makes the plotlines of the Hippocratic Oath seem rather simple-minded. It tells of a young girl who, despite a protracted fever, stubbornly resists all attempts at an examination of her throat. Her parents' harrying good intentions merely make things worse:

The child's mouth was already bleeding. Her tongue was out and she was screaming in wild hysterical shrieks. Perhaps I should have desisted and come back in an hour or more. No doubt it would have been better. But I have seen at least two children lying dead in bed of neglect in such cases, and feeling that I must get a diagnosis now or never I went in again. But the worst of it was that I too had got beyond reason. I could have torn the child apart in my fury and enjoyed it. It was a pleasure to attack her. My face was burning with it.

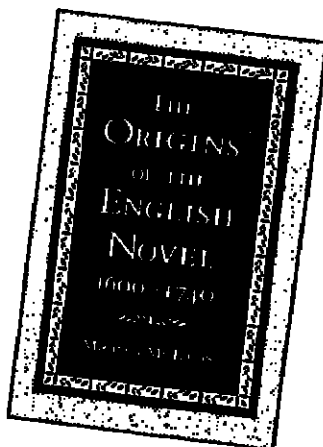
Eventually, using a silver spoon and at the pitch of arousal, he succeeds in prising open her mouth and glimpsing, on her tongue, the membranous evidence of the diphtheria he had suspected.

Williams is honest, not only in the portrayal of his patients, but in the display of his own shortcomings. Often brusque and blunt - there is always another patient waiting to be seen - he can be generous and attentive to those who engage his attention. Above all, he listens, and it is what his patients say that provides the impetus to what he writes. These stories may have come, like a good number of his other fictions, whose upheavals and crises they are, less to, prematurely into the world. It is the rawness, artlessness even, that gives them the urgency and conviction of lived experience.

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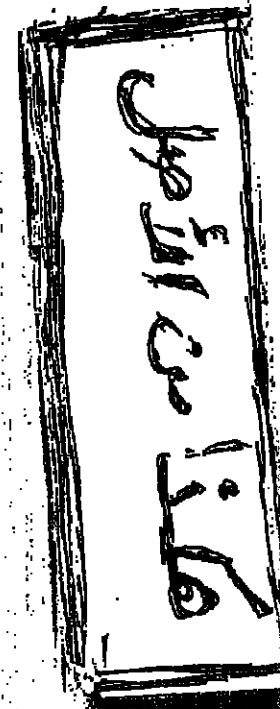
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## Empire style

Richard Krautheimer

CHARLES B. MCLENDON  
The Imperial Abbey of Farfa: Architectural  
currents of the early Middle Ages  
197pp. Yale University Press. £30.  
0300033338

The ruins of the abbey of Farfa are about an hour's drive north of Rome. One of the great convents of Europe in the early Middle Ages, its history is well documented by chroniclers from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. Founded by Thomas de Maurienne late in the seventh century, it was closely linked from the outset first to the Frankish rulers, then to the Carolingian, Ottonian and Salian emperors. Starting in the ninth century, it was a *Reichs-abbey*, an Imperial abbey, immediately dependent on the Empire, rather than being under papal jurisdiction, and hence a key stronghold in the warfare between emperors and popes raging through the early Middle Ages.

Today, little remains of the medieval abbey church, in part below, in part outside its Renaissance successor: a short stretch of nave wall to the north; a stretch of mosaic pavement, likewise running east and west; to the west, outside the Renaissance church, the walls of a continuous transept, short and deep; finally, its apse and, below it, an annular crypt, which have been excavated by Charles B. McLendon in co-operation with the British School at Rome and its then director, David Whitehouse, and with the support of both British and American institutions. These excavations, in three successive campaigns, have also brought to light elements of the medieval convent: a cloister-like "atrium" behind the apse, set off from it by a curved wall, serving as a burial ground; and slightly south, a building enclosing a chapel. None of the walls so far described, inside and to the west of the Renaissance church, rises, if at all, more than a

couple of feet above ground. Except, that is, a huge entrance tower of late medieval date. But on the opposite flank of the Renaissance church, rises the east end of the medieval abbey church: the piers of a crossing, not quite axial with the remains of the nave; north of it, a massive, tall bell-tower; and, projecting east, a deep and high square "presbytery" — why not call it a square apse?

McLendon has carefully researched and describes in detail all these remains, taking into consideration cautiously, and never without a caveat, findings reported by earlier students of the site or recorded in photographs of haphazard diggings — foundation walls and the like. Based on this archaeological evidence and the supporting written sources, he has been able to unravel the building history of the

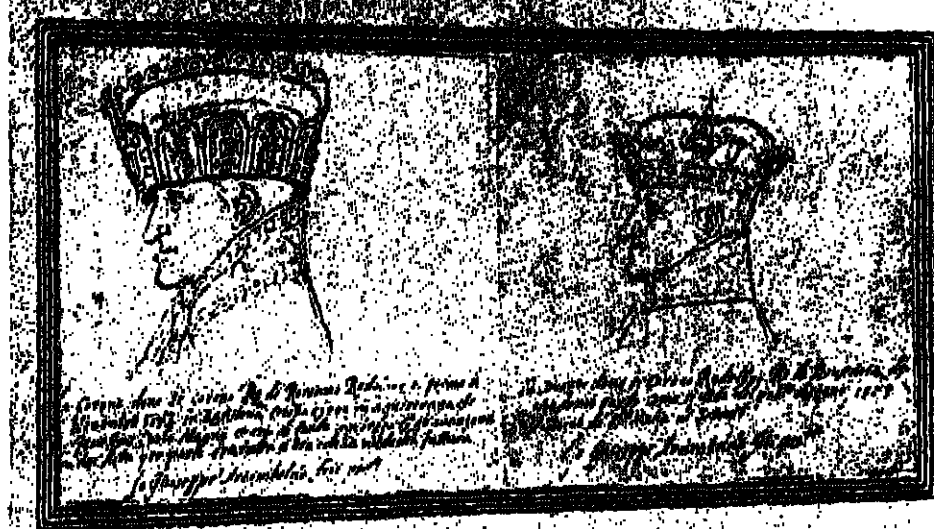
church and to present its successive phases of construction both by word and by survey plans, elevations, and reconstruction drawings. This solid foundation enables him to place the abbey church of Farfa as it presented itself successively in the eighth, the ninth and the eleventh centuries into the picture of contemporary architecture in Western Europe.

The first major result of McLendon's research is indeed that, contrary to former belief, the remains, rather than being uniformly of Carolingian date, belong to a sequence of structures, different in plan and date. A first church, an aisleless nave, can be safely dated to the eighth or the late seventh century. This, whether or not built by Thomas de Maurienne, the convent's founder, was thoroughly remodelled by Abbot Sichardus in 830–42 when the

axis was reversed. Two hundred years later, in a second major rebuilding, the axis was reversed again; and the church became double-headed, with both eastern and western choirs, parts and altars; but the east end, with its massing of volumes and the tall towers, dominated the design.

While the masonry technique and some of the details throughout this succession of churches are local or linked to nearby models, architects and patrons at Farfa from the outset looked far afield for their church plans and other features. Aisleless churches flanked by burial chambers in pre-Carolingian Europe were widespread, from Angers to Mistail in the Grisons and from Canterbury to Carintha and south-east into the mountains of western Serbia and Montenegro. Rare as it is in Italy, the type may have been brought to Farfa by Thomas de Maurienne from his native Savoy. In planning the second church, Abbot Sichardus clearly turned to Rome, whence relics of Roman saints were brought to safety from the abandoned catacombs to be housed in the annular crypt. For the "third church", the towered east end, the architect again drew on faraway sources: the abbey churches and cathedrals built from the Rhineland to Lorraine by the Salian emperors in the first half of the eleventh century — Echternach, St Maximin at Trier, Speyer, and in Piedmont (then closely linked to the Empire), Aosta, Ivrea. By and large, then, Farfa, throughout its great time, the early Middle Ages, maintains strong links beyond the Alps to the core of the Empire. Its architecture reflects its policy as a *Reichen-abbey*.

It is a pity that the publishers, in producing the book, have failed to live up to the high standards set by the author in preparing it. A large part of the illustrations, except line drawings, are practically illegible blobs of black, grey and startling white. What could have been the model of a monograph in architectural history has been deprived by the publisher of an essential element, good illustrations.



Giuseppe Arcimboldo's profiles of Rudolf II. Arcimboldo's autograph dedications state that on the left Rudolf wears the crown with which he was crowned King of Rome in Ratisbon on November 1, 1575, on the right he wears that with which he was crowned King of Bohemia earlier in the year. They are taken from *The Arcimboldo Effect* (402pp. Thames and Hudson. Paperback, £32. 0500 27471 1), to be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

## Treasures in context

Giles Robertson

RONA GOFFEN  
Pietà and Patronage in Renaissance Venice:  
Bellini, Titian, and the Franciscans  
285pp. Yale University Press. £30.  
0300034555

Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the mother church of the Franciscans, remains the greatest treasury of the religious art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Venice. It contains one of the finest of Giovanni Bellini's altarpieces and two of Titian's in their original frames and settings, albeit with a degree of modern illumination which would have astonished the painters. It is not only visually that these works remain in context, they are also constituent parts of a spiritual organism which still functions today. The elucidation of this spiritual context and the exposition of the complex meanings which these altarpieces may have been intended to convey is the purpose of Rona Goffen's study. She belongs to the school of maximal interpretation where every element in the painting is given a precise meaning. We are to some extent left with the question of who devised these coded messages: patron, clergy or the artist? It is hard to know if and how contemporary viewers understood them.

Not all the interpretations that Professor Goffen offers are equally convincing. We are told that the placing of the Virgin above the side saints in Bellini's triptych is symbolic of the Immaculate Conception; but this is certainly not always so, since Bellini first introduced this feature into his work (as well as perhaps to Venetian painting) in his altarpiece for SS Giovanni e Paolo, the mother church of the Dominicans who were violent opponents of the doctrine. We are also told that the dedication of this altar must have been to the Immacolata because the Latin inscription in the mosaic of the apse in the painting is a quotation from the Office of the Immaculate Conception by Leonardo Nogarola printed in Venice in 1478, but this can hardly be the case since it is in the form of two hexameters, though it may incorporate phrasology from the Office.

Goffen gives us much valuable information about the patronage of these altarpieces. Bellini's triptych was commissioned by Benedetto Pesaro and his brothers, of the San Benedetto branch of the family, while Titian's altarpiece in the nave was commissioned some thirty years later by Jacopo Pesaro, of the dal Carro branch. Jacopo had served under his cousin Benedetto, in command of twenty papal galleys, at the capture of Santa Maura from the Turks in 1502, and considered that his services had not been adequately acknowledged. His altarpiece is clearly designed to assert his claim to have been the architect of that victory. Though the dedication of the altar is to the Immaculate Conception this is essentially a crusading manifesto, with the "in hoc signo" of the great Cross at the summit of the picture. If we accept the Immaculatio interpretation of the giant columns, which have been shown to represent a late modification of the design of the picture, we may wonder whether their introduction was partly dictated by criticism from the clergy that the dedication of the altar to the Immacolata had not been sufficiently stressed.

The crowning glory of the church is Titian's "Assumption" over the high altar, and one has only to read the muted praise accorded to it by nineteenth-century critics, who knew it during its century of exile in the galleries of the Accademia, to appreciate the importance of its physical context. Here again, in her spiritual exposition, Goffen seems to overstress the references to the Immaculate Conception. As this doctrine was passionately espoused by the Franciscans, references to it in any Marian context in a Franciscan church are not surprising, but here they are noticeably oblique, compared, for example, with those in Bellini's painting now in S Pietro Martire at Murano.

Finally there is a discussion of the late "Pietà" in the Accademia, intended, so Rudolf tells us, for the altar in the Frari before which Titian wished to be buried, but which was never delivered to the church. This work is a wonderful summing up of Titian's achievement as a religious painter and this chapter forms a fitting conclusion to a book which enriches our appreciation of the works it discusses.

## Sharing a new vision

Lauro Martines

GEORGE HOLMES  
Florence, Rome and the Origins of the  
Renaissance  
273pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25.  
019 8225768

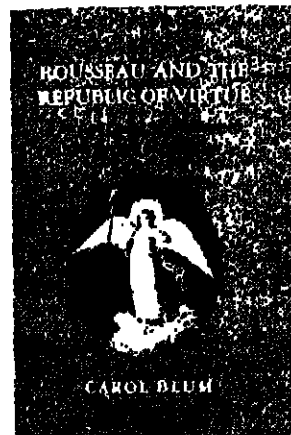
George Holmes centres the Italian Renaissance on artistic and literary "realism", which begins, he holds, with certain artists and poets of the late thirteenth century. The artists — Cavallini, Cimabue, Nicola Pisano — groped their way towards a sense of spatial and figural realism by imitating Roman classical models. With Dante's *Inferno* far in advance, the poets sought in their fictions to portray real men or new realities. Holmes sees realism as the standard for the Renaissance because it was to make for the triumphant, innovative line in the high culture of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. From Masaccio to Michelangelo, and from Boccaccio to Machiavelli, the new cultural ideal would seek the realistic representation of people in their world. The exclusive concern of *Florence, Rome and the Origins of the Renaissance* is, however, the "explosion" that took place around 1300, seen above all in the art of Dante and Giotto. Holmes provides chapters on political conflict (at Florence especially), on banking and industry at Florence and Siena, on the profundity and Franciscan springs of popular piety, on papal and imperial politics in Tuscany, and on "Lay Thought at Florence". His general contention is that the rise of realism in literature and the visual arts had to do with the tenor of city life, but more specifically with the artistic patronage of two popes (Nicholas III and IV), with Florentine and Sienese contacts in Rome, and with "the world of Florentine speech and life which he [Dante] had known before 1302". We are not told, however, how exactly these occasions, or colluded with, the birth of realism. And so the gist of his argument is left hanging, for the analysis is not conducted along the boundaries between city life and art, or between society and letters. Instead, it is directed away from society to the art itself, to poetry.

Holmes is at his best when entertaining questions of connoisseurship, of the influence of one artist or poet on another, or of the early versus the late Dante. Whatever the novelty or push of politics and social organization in Florence, realism in Italian art is born, for Holmes, from the effort to imitate classical models, not from changes in outlook fomented by the intensity of urban life in Tuscany. Similarly, in grappling with Dante's poetry, the author concentrates on formal and biographical concerns, so that when indeed he finds some link there with the world, he loses its public-social aspect by taking it as matter in Dante's unique biography. He does not examine the finding — for example, the realism of certain episodes in the *Inferno* — in the light of new stresses also present in other poets and writers. If Dante and Giotto truly share a new vision of men, as Holmes suggests, then the vital origins of this bonding cannot be in distant Rome, papal or classical; they must be in the structuring values, pragmatic and materialistic, of the dominant groups in Florence.

The virtues of this book are in its reworking of material not available in English. This includes most of what Holmes has to say about political strife, the Tuscan economy, Florentine supremacy in Tuscany, and Tuscan foreign and commercial relations. There is a notable freshness and sparkle in his chapters on popular religious feeling, on the impact of St Francis, and on the movement of ideas into Florence. Averroist Aristotelianism, with its denial of personal immortality, enters the city in the intellectual baggage of physicians, trained at Bologna. Parisian scholasticism arrives with friars and clerics. And Holmes offers us snapshots of the renowned female saints of thirteenth and fourteenth-century Italy. But I am not persuaded that these women were models for the poets of "the sweet new style" — Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Dante, and others. The semi-angelic lady of their verse is less a religious exemplar than a moral, social and snobbish ideal, serving to help set them apart from the coarse herd of common men. Cavalcanti would have considered the saintly women of his day too inelegant and physical for his imagistic purposes.

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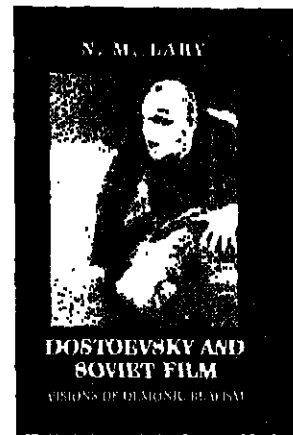


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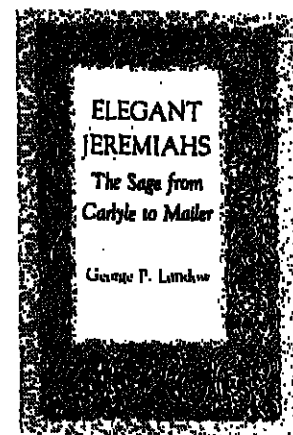


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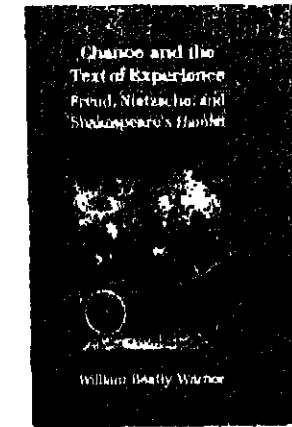
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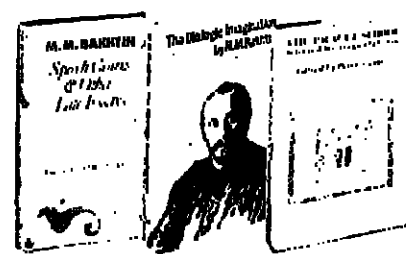
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on the Existence of God Richard Campbell

From Radical Empiricism to Kant's Critical  
Idealism Justin Hartnack

Bradley's Moral Psychology Don MacIntyre

On Understanding Works of Art  
An Essay in Philosophical Aesthetics  
Petra von Morstein

## ARCHAEOLOGY

The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima  
Excavation Reports Robert J. Bull, Edgar Krentz,  
and Olin J. Stork (eds.)

American School of Oriental Research Excavation Reports

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Handicapped  
A Guidebook for Health Care Professionals  
William S. Rowe and Sandra Savage

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## Performing right

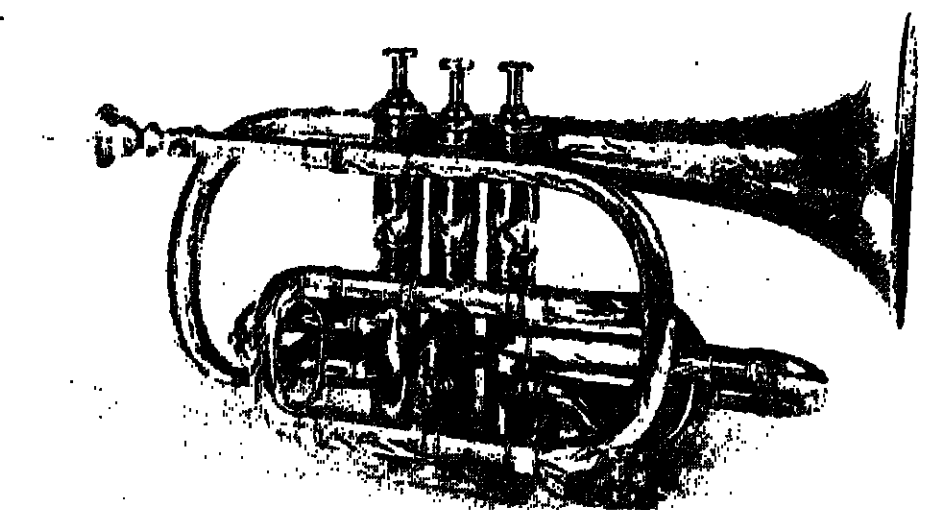
Colin Matthews

ANDREW STILLER  
Handbook of Instrumentation  
533pp. California University Press. £55.25.  
052004423 1  
NORMAN DEL MAR  
A Companion to the Orchestra  
266pp. Faber. £9.95.  
0571 14735 6

Books on instrumentation (or orchestration – the terms are virtually synonymous) may be thought of as the composer's equivalent of the dictionary, even though they are inevitably aimed at a wider audience than that particularly specialized one. For while a composer is not very likely to turn to a manual of harmony or counterpoint in order to get round a difficult corner, the complexity of musical instruments and their continuing evolution mean that reference books may frequently be consulted when a problem arises. There are, after all, some pretty esoteric areas to master. How many musicians are aware of the precise details of German cavalry fingering, used for low trumpet notes (page 81 in Andrew Stiller's *Handbook of Instrumentation*), or that "coques" in Varrèse's *Arcana* are coconut shells – preferably artificial ones (page 60 in Norman Del Mar's *A Companion to the Orchestra*)? As in the comparable field of notation there is always something to be learned, and even the most accomplished composers can make mistakes, or at least cause unintended problems for the performer.

Andrew Stiller's aim, obviously, is to put an end to such shortcomings, and anyone who absorbs the more than 500 pages of his *Handbook* is certainly going to learn the "how" of instrumentation. His intention is to provide "a guide to the potentials and limitations of every instrument currently in use for the performance of classical and popular music in North America" (with almost exclusive reference to twentieth-century practice). Thus as well as flute and trumpet, we learn the precise details of windchimes and pedal steel guitar. The information is encyclopaedic. Stiller claims to be dealing with the *craft* rather than the *art* of instrumentation – the "how" at the expense of the "why". Indeed – though I would hesitate before initiating a semantic argument with a man who begins a section "Organologically, brass instruments belong to the category of *lip-vibrated aerophones*" – the book could far more accurately have been called a "handbook of instruments".

Even as such it is difficult to know quite who the ideal reader might be. There are hardly enough composers to go round; yet for the student the detail is surely too all-encompassing. The 137 pages devoted to percussion include such willful obscurities as a full-page table to illustrate fifteen ways of playing congas with



A cornet (c 1900) with the maker's mark of J. W. Pepper engraved on the bell, reproduced from American Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Laurence Libin (224pp. Norton. £32. 0 393 02277 3).

the fingertips, and two pages on dumbbells, eastern drums which Stiller disarmingly admits are nowhere to be found in notated Western music. (Tabla, the incomparably more important Indian drum, merits only one sentence; of one of my favourite instruments, the Waterphone, there is no mention.) For all that he is dealing with well over a hundred different instruments, Stiller's treatment of percussion is manifestly obsessive. Because the family of orchestral strings numbers no more than five, he allows it a mere sixteen pages. Even the guitar family merits twenty-five. Such disparity is little short of monstrous, and can't be justified.

Further evidence of his lop-sided approach comes with the long section devoted to early music instruments, which, valuable though it is, really belongs to another book altogether. Yet his treatment of the human voice is outstanding – required reading for performers as well as composers. The section on electronics is excellent too. There are some useful appendices, but the first of them, proposing new clefs for very high and low notes, is a nonsense, as any instrumentalist would have told him instantly.

Read with discrimination, the *Handbook* has its virtues, and it is not to be denied that it contains a wealth of information, not readily available elsewhere – nor will I pretend that I shan't be consulting it myself from time to time. But it is difficult to recommend it, at such a price (to which the coffee-table appearance, with much ill-judged and wasted space, surely contributes), and when there are other books around that cover as much ground as any ordinary mortal is likely to need. Piston's old warhorse, *Orchestration*, remains conservatively essential, while the more recent Blatter

employed. Ian Woodfield's study of the early history of the viol (reviewed in the *TLS* of January 25, 1985) set new standards of precise, scholarly enquiry into these questions, and now Mary Remnant's regional examination of bowed instruments provides exactly what is needed to take our knowledge beyond the somewhat general surveys which still largely fill the literature.

A fundamental difficulty concerns the evidence. With the exception of the two fragile and fragmentary fiddles dug out of Henry VIII's recently excavated flagship Mary Rose (that they were there at all is surely the most interesting thing about them), there are no surviving instruments from medieval England. Most of Remnant's arguments turn on various kinds of pictorial evidence – sculpture, glass, wall-paintings, and above all manuscript illumination – with literary sources providing only occasional support. The consequent interpretational problems are sensitively handled, and from this surprisingly large corpus of documentation a clear picture of separate instrumental types emerges. Crowd, rebec, fiddle, viol, and trumpet marine are here defined with considerable precision, and it is this sense of a distinctively English body of instruments that is one of the book's most important contributions.

*Instrumentation/Orchestration* – though often maddening – covers much the same ground with far greater economy. (Significantly it is omitted from Stiller's bibliography – as indeed is the monumental Berlioz/Strauss *Treatise*.)

And now there is Norman Del Mar's *Companion* as well, to which one turns with homely relief. For all his rather insular approach and occasional bouts of too much common sense, Del Mar is refreshingly down to earth and practical, as one would expect from him in a book "expressly written for the lay listener and student" (to quote the jacket). Indeed there is no real attempt to cover the same ground as Stiller, as such entries as "applause", "editing" and "encores" demonstrate. But at the same time, Del Mar's vast experience in working with orchestras allows him to advance the kind of practical advice which textbooks on instrumentation rarely offer. For instance, the precise way in which a string section will "divide" is an important and neglected subject which here (as in his earlier and more detailed *Anatomy of the Orchestra*, 1981) – from which much of the present material derives) is explained with admirable clarity. The descriptions of instruments' characteristics and capabilities are concise without being in any way superficial. There are a few to my mind dubious judgments (the contrabass clarinet is not "dumbly and unreliable"); occasional lack of precision (percussion details are sometimes a little vague); and some omissions (no entry for "clef", and a pity that Del Mar, while including the typewriter, ignores – like Stiller – the piano). But this is an unpretentious useful handbook, whose particular asset is its readability. And there is no question as to which of these two books is the more authoritative on the subject of coconut shells.

It is in moving away from a meticulous archaeology that Canon Gilpin himself would have recognized and admired, towards the more speculative area of performance, that Remnant's ideas seem less convincing. Indeed, the calls for experimentation and the generous attitudes towards the type of music where bowed instruments could be used have a distinctly old-fashioned air about them. In the case of chant "there is no reason why this [instrumental participation] should not have happened in certain circumstances", while as for the Worcester fragments "many of these are suitable for instrumental participation in appropriate circumstances". Mary Remnant is swimming against the scholarly tide in believing that the use of instruments "in early monophony and polyphony was widespread, even to the extent of adorning that Léonel Power's motet 'Ave Regina coelorum' sounds very well when played on a portable organ and fiddle together, the organist playing the two upper parts in the right hand while the fiddler plays the bottom one". There is no respectable evidence for such a suggestion. It is ironic that this admirably argued and well-produced book should conclude by promoting an approach to the use of instruments in medieval and Renaissance music that the evidence collected here will itself do much to undermine.

## Selling Mozart

Alec Hyatt King

Sotheby's sale of Continental Printed Books, Manuscripts and Music today will include, as lot 457, a volume containing the autograph scores of nine symphonies which Mozart composed in Salzburg between March 1773 and May 1774. This volume has an unusually interesting history. Leopold Mozart apparently decided to have bound in three volumes these nine autographs and six more of his son's instrumental works. Volume One comprised the "Andrètte" serenade, K185, and a march, K189; Volume Two, the concerto for two violins, K190, and three serenades – K201, K204 and the epochal "Haffner", K209; Volume Three, the symphonies K162, K181, K183, K184, K199, K200, K201 and K202. Since none of these three volumes was in Mozart's possession at his death, it seems likely that Leopold had retained them in Salzburg, whence they went astray after he died.

The first recorded new owner was Schubert's close friend Leopold von Sonnleithner, and from him they passed to the Hamburg music publisher Cranz who issued first editions of K181, K183 and K184. Köchel-Einstein (1937) listed all three volumes as being still owned by that firm, but they became scattered during the Second World War. By the mid-1950s, "Cranz" Volume Three, as it is habitually denoted, was privately owned by "Dr K. R." in Vienna and was still in his possession in 1963. He had earlier generously made it available to the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* for their definitive critical edition.

Leopold Mozart deemed these works so significant that when he had them bound in the stout, bluish-grey wrappers that still preserve them, he included a complete thematic index in his own hand. The symphonies fall into three fairly distinct types. K162, K199 and K182 are three-movement "opera-symphonies", such as Mozart heard during his visits to Italy, while K181 and K184 are more in the manner of true overtures. The remainder – K183, K200, K201, K202 (each in four movements) – mark an important stage in the new mastery of symphonic forms which he achieved in his late teens. Moreover, in each Mozart found an individual voice, distinct from the rather impersonal character of the five others. K183, for instance, is a worthy forerunner of his later masterpieces in G minor, and K201 in A is a gem of extraordinary purity and strength.

Leopold died on May 28, 1787. Nearly 200 years later, the future ownership of these Mozart autograph scores is again uncertain. "Cranz" Volume One found its way after the Second World War to "a central European collection"; it was then broken up, and portions of the "Andrètte" serenade were sold piecemeal by an American consortium in 1975. "Cranz" Volume Two is now in "a private Swiss collection". Sotheby's publicity for the volume containing the nine originally separated scores regularly uses the singular, e.g. "this manuscript". But their only singularity lies in having been bound within one cover as "Konvolut" (in the untranslatable German sense of a bundle). This specious usage underlies the following claim: "It is the longest and most important autograph manuscript of Mozart remaining in private hands and is arguably the most important musical manuscript by any composer still in private ownership." Apart from the dubious suggestions of continuous pagination and the challenging assumption and value judgment of the final clause, it would surely be more realistic to make any comparison on the basis of one to one and like to like. Consider the following estimate of the "Haffner" serenade (in "Cranz" Volume Two mentioned above):

This eight-movement work was the most early orchestral piece that Mozart had so far composed. Up to this stage in Mozart's career there were, even in his finest symphonies, movements or parts of movements in which maturity was still not quite complete; but in the "Haffner" Serenade we have a work at whose artistic perfection one can only wonder. We have passed a new boundary.

The author of those words, for *The Mozart Companion*, is J. P. Larsen, whose views, in the same book, on some of the nine symphonies, Sotheby's quote in their publicity. But whatever their integral or relative value, the destination of "Cranz" Volume Three will be of tremendous interest to Mozart scholars.

## Territorial imperatives

C. H. Holland

JAMES A. SECORD  
Controversy in Victorian Geology: The Cambrian-Silurian dispute  
333pp. Princeton University Press. £33.10.  
0691 084173

In the summer of 1831 Roderick Murchison was to be knighted and to become Director of the Geological Survey) and Adam Sedgwick, who then held the Chair of Geology at Cambridge, set out separately into Wales. Here, to little understood "greywacke" lay beneath the simple succession of strata which William Smith, the father of English geology, had envisaged as slices of bread-and-butter on a plate, proceeding each other south-eastwards across England. In South Wales and the borderlands, Murchison found what appeared to be a relatively simple sequence of rocks rich in fossils, which he called the Silurian after an ancient tribe, the Silures. His discovery was to achieve world-wide fame in a massive book, *The Silurian System*, published in 1839. Sedgwick travelled to North Wales, to find a group of more difficult and older rocks which he eventually named the Cambrian, after the old name for Wales.

Sedgwick's rocks contained fewer fossils and what seemed to be like those of Murchison's succession. The latter then attempted to extend his Silurian System downwards in time. Sedgwick became increasingly resentful and the two men, who had once been firm friends and indeed collaborators, became bitterly opposed. The controversy continued even after their deaths in the early 1870s. It was eventually settled in a compromise suggested by Charles Lapworth, a Scottish schoolmaster who became the first Professor of Geology in what is now the University of Birmingham. His intermediate Ordovician System, named in 1879, arose partly because in Bohemia it had been made apparent by Joachim Barrande that there were not two but three great fossil faunas

in these older rocks. However, the crucial factor in stopping Murchison's expansive activities had come earlier, at May Hill, a small, wooded eminence skirted by the road from Gloucester to Ross-on-Wye. In 1852 Sedgwick and his assistant recognized that Murchison had confused the May Hill sandstone and its Silurian fossils with the older Caradoc rocks of the Welsh borderland which were later to be placed well within the Ordovician.

James Secord's meticulous work, with its bibliography of over 600 references and copious footnotes concerning the vast correspondence he has been able to collate, brings to light various new aspects of this dispute. He sees how these two eminent scientists tended to rewrite the history of the affair, and Sedgwick as fighting "for Cambria in part as a compensation for his failure to complete a major geological book, while Murchison defended his Silurian territories partly out of a wish to preserve his scientific accomplishments intact". Secord demonstrates also how the conflict fostered research and discovery in geology, whose history will benefit much from his careful charting of its every detail.

Secord has tried to give us "a good story" as well as "a contribution to the cultural history of actual scientific practice". In the latter respect he is successful in exploring the ways in which "technical procedures, previous training, social pressures and personal pride joined together to make a classification", while the portraits he provides of Sedgwick and Murchison make us want to know more of their personalities. A few quotations bring out Murchison's liking for military metaphors: "Having skimmed to your heart's content the whole region S of the Severn is but a poor reason for beating up for recruits in order to make an onslaught on me in Denbighshire."

The disagreement was all very territorial. At Dudley, during a British Association excursion, the Bishop of Oxford, "Soapy Sam" Wilberforce, proclaimed Murchison "King of Siluria" before an audience of cheering thousands.

## Thinking in millions

Wilma George

JAMES W. VALENTINE (Editor)  
Phanerozoic Diversity Patterns: Profiles in Macroevolution  
411pp. Princeton University Press. £38.50 (paperback, £10.90).  
0691 08374 6

Phanerozoic is the name given to the past 600 million years of earth history, an aeon of time during which recognizable fossils of complex animals and plants have existed. *Phanerozoic Diversity Patterns* explores changes that have occurred in the abundance and variety of animal and plant lineages and in community structures throughout that time.

The first part – on trends in diversity – analyses plant and animal diversification and emphasizes the problems of dating rocks and fossils. Thus, a bivalve mollusc bed in the United States is contemporaneous with one in the Soviet Union if both contain the same species. This works for the geologist thinking in millions of years, but the biologist thinks with a narrower time-scale. Radical biological changes, like the spread of molluscs along a shoreline, can occur in a few thousand years, but in the rocks such events appear to be instantaneous. Consider the dinosaurs. Was there a worldwide catastrophe or did the dinosaurs disappear over the millennia first from one place and then from another? This question perplexes, but Kevin Padian and William Clemens argue that each genus of dinosaur existed for only a short time, to be replaced by another; and that the catastrophe occurred when replacement was not rapid enough. Was replacement affected by the massive diversification of flowering plants or was slow replacement inherent to the dinosaur? In the first part of the book there are more questions than answers.

The second part describes patterns of diversity in marine faunas. As a result of statistical analysis, trilobite fossils, and, indeed, trilobites themselves, become possible, to work

out the spatial relationships of palaeocommunities. Shore-living communities can be distinguished from deep-sea communities, mud-living communities from floaters. In the early years of the phanerozoic, the trilobite fauna seems to have dominated inshore habitats but, as it extended its colonization offshore, a new fauna, the brachiopods, became dominant inshore. The mud-dwelling, two-shelled brachiopods followed the same pattern: colonizing outwards from the shore; and, immediately, sea snails and bivalve molluscs took over inshore. An inshore fauna is more liable to extinction than a deep-sea fauna – for example, when sea level changes – and empty places are quickly filled by a new fauna. But Richard Bambach claims to have shown that ecological niches can lie vacant for millions of years. When the giant, fish-like reptiles disappeared some 70 million years ago their niche remained empty until the toothed whales evolved 25 million years later.

Part Three – on major faunal patterns – is devoted to mathematical modelling from which the conclusion is reached that most genera of living organisms are restricted in their range: only a few spread widely. Not unexpectedly, the widespread genera survive longer than the restricted.

The fourth and final part of the book is about trilobites and ammonites, both of which show major diversification patterns through time and both of which diversity at different rates at different times. Ammonites persisted for over 300 million years but had two shaky episodes before a third and final collapse brought them to extinction.

To what extent are patterns of diversity extrinsic or intrinsic? The consensus from this collection of detailed analyses is that changes are the result of events external to animals and plants. It is only through an analysis of fossil plants, it is only through their distribution that major changes in flora and fauna can be understood. *Phanerozoic Diversity Patterns* is an essential source book for the biologist interested in the distribution of animals and plants in space and time.

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For a long time there has been a need to replace the useful but very outdated *Classical Dictionary* of Lemprière. For factual and historical matters this was done years ago by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*; and, with the publication of Pierre Grimal's *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Lemprière can finally be relegated to the shelf reserved for books which have honourably outlived their usefulness."

J. H. C. Leach TLS 8th August 1986

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John C. Leach



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## Anthropology

Friedrich, Paul. *The Princes of Narayan: An essay in anthropological method*. Austin: Texas UP, 302pp. \$29.95 (hardcover), \$12.95 (paperback). 0 292 76432 4 (hc), 0 292 76502 9 (pb). 15/87.

Hocart, A.M., edited by Rodney Needham. *Imagination and Proof: Selected essays of A. M. Hocart*. Tucson: Arizona UP, 130pp. \$19.95. 0 8165 1007 5. 10/87.

## Archaeology

Alcock, Leslie. *Economy, Society and Warfare Among the Britons and Saxons*. Cardiff: Wales UP, 343pp., illus. £35. 0 7083 0963 1. 7/87.

## Architecture

MacK, Susan R., photographs by Mary S. Hammond. *Planes: The creation of a Renaissance city*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 250pp., illus. \$45.95. 0 8014 1699 9. 4/87.

## Art, including photography

Caruselli, Susan L. *The Quest for Eternity: Chinese ceramic sculptures from the People's Republic of China*. Thames and Hudson, 161pp., plates. £15.95 (paperback). 0 500 27465 7. 11/87.

Deavir, Bernard, editor. *The Impressionists at First Hand*. Thames and Hudson, 224pp., illus. £4.95 (paperback). 0 500 26209 5. 11/87.

Gessaway, Deborah, and Mandy Roseman. *Beyond Words: Images from America's concentration camps*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 176pp., illus. \$27.45. 0 8014 1919 6. 15/87.

Hulien, Pontus, editor. *The Arcimboldo Effect*. Thames and Hudson, 402pp., plates. £32 (paperback). 0 500 27471 1. 4/87.

Maguire, W. A. *Caught in Time: The photographs of Alexander Hogg of Belfast 1870-1939*. Friar Bush Press, 24 College Park Avenue, Belfast 7. 202pp., illus. £12.95. 0 946872 04 X. 14/87.

Prokopenko, Stephen G., editor; text by Marcel Franciso. *The Modern Dutch Poster: The first 50 years*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 156pp. £12.95 (paperback). 0 262 66061 X. 30/87.

Russell, Mario Lascoux. *The final photographic record*. Thames and Hudson, 208pp., plates. £30. 0 500 23479 5. 4/87.

Shaw, Sam, and Norman Rosten. *Marilyn Among Friends*. Bloomsbury, 192pp., plates. £14.95. 0 7475 0012 6. 21/87.

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Barbara, Jack, William McBrien and Helen Bajaj. *Stevie Smith: A bibliography*. Mansell, 183pp. £35. 0 7201 1837 9. 27/87.

Bolton, H. Philip. *Dickens Dramatized*. Mansell, 501pp. £60. 0 7201 1804 2. 27/87.

Russell, K. F. *British Anatomy, 1525-1800: A bibliography of works published in Britain, America and on the Continent, 2nd edition*. St Paul's Bibliographies, 245pp. £38. 0 906795 38. 24/87.

## Biography, including letters and diaries

Chandler, David, editor. *Napoleon's Marshals*. Widenfeld and Nicolson, 500pp., illus. £25. 0 297 79124 9. 21/87.

Emmons, Noel, editor. *Without Conscience: Charles Manson in His Own Words*. Grafton, 221pp., illus. £12.95. 0 246 13167 5. 11/87.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American saga*. Widenfeld and Nicolson, 932pp., illus. £16.95. 0 297 79090 0. 30/87.

Kearney, John. *The Spy Who Never Was: The life and loves of Mata Hari*. Michael Joseph, 214pp., illus. £12.95. 0 7181 2614 9. 26/87.

Limb, Sue. *Love Forty: How I turned over a new life*. Bantam, 240pp. 19.95. 0 593 01353 3. 14/87.

Litzeler, Paul Michael; translated by Jaulice Furness. *Hermann Broch: A biography*. Quartet, 329pp., illus. £25. 0 7043 2604 3. 15/87.

Mark, Hans. *The Space Station: A personal journey*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 264pp. £33.70. 0 8223 0727 8. 6/87.

Oman, Carol Nelson (1st pub. 1947). *Hodder and Stoughton*, 596pp. £12.95 (paperback). 0 340 40672 0. 1/87.

Pellegrini, Angelo. *American Dream: An immigrant's quest* (Pub. in US 1986). San Francisco: North Point, distr. in UK by Abri/ft. 214pp. £9.95. 0 86547 241 6.

Rehn, D. L. A. *Tribute to the Reinas*. Ifracombe: Stockwell, 16pp. £1.50 (paperback). 0 7223 2148 1. 5/87.

Seymour-Smith, Martin Robert. *Graves: His life and work* (1st pub. 1982). Grafton, 623pp. £5.95 (paperback). 0 586 08622 6. 21/87.

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord; edited by Cecil V. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr. *The Letters of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, vol. 2, 1851-1870*. Oxford: Clarendon, 385pp. £40. 0 19 812691 3. 7/87.

Van Domelen, John E. *Tarzan of Athens: A biographical study of C. Wilson Knight*. Bristol: Redcliffe, 172pp. £8.95. 0 948265 31 0. 28/87.

## Business

Grayson, Leslie E. *Who and How in Planning for Large Companies: Generalizations from the experiences of oil companies*. Macmillan, 241pp. £29.50. 0 333 40575 7. 4/87.

Rosner, Roy. *The Intuitive Manager*. Aldershot: Cower, 180pp. £17.50. 0 566 02728 3. 28/87.

## Classics

Euripides; edited and translated by M. L. West. *Orestes*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 297pp. £18.75 (hardcover), £8.25 (paperback). 0 85668 310 8 (hc), 0 85668 311 6 (pb).

## Fiction

Bickel, John. *Calvin American Falls*. Grafton, 619pp. £5.95 (paperback). 0 586 08568 8. 21/87.

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